ISSN 1364-6923

Hot Spring

A Journal of Commitment

GENOCIDE AGAINST TAMILS

"The best kept secret in recent times"

May-June 1997

Are you looking for a mini cab from Heathrow?

Dial: 0181- 568 4444 or
0181- 847 4444

24 hour service
7 days a week

We take you to any destination
We will collect you within 10-15 min. of your call
We offer very competitive prices

ACADEMICAR also needs controllers and owner drivers with cars not older than 4years. Guranteed Weekly earnings £500 plus (no bars and pubs work)

ACADEMICAR

Hot Spring
A Journal of commitment

Vol: 2 N°: 5 May-June. 1997

Editor
S.Sivanayagam

**HOT SPRING
P.O.Box 14258
London
SE1 4ZR
UK**

**e-mail:
editor.hotspring@virgin.net**

Published by
Melrose Publications Ltd.
U.K.

Price: £1

Annual subscription rates:
UK / India / Sri Lanka: *£18 / US $30*
Australia: *Aus $50*
Canada: *Canada $45*
USA: *US $40*
All other countries: *£20 / US$ 40*
(all inclusive of postage)
Cheques to be drawn in favour of Melrose Publications Ltd.

The views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the publishers

Comment

How "little girls" terrified the Sri Lankan army !

*"What are little girls made of ?
Sugar and spice
and all that's nice
That's what little girls are made of"*

So claims some old nursery rhyme. But battle-scarred Sri Lankan soldiers K.G.Dharmawana and A.M.G.Wijaya Bandara know better. Recalling the night of the Tiger attack on the Sri Lankan border post at Thandikulam on 9th June, Wijaya Bandara told Reuters: "... hundreds of **little LTTE girls** were withdrawing while attacking...."

Said Dharmawana who lost his right leg: "Under the very intense fighting I had to abandon my bunker and withdraw to the next nearest one, from where I saw more than 60 Tiger girls creeping into the bunker where I was a short while ago....".

37-year old policeman Bandula Sarath Kumar who crawled on all fours for more than a kilometre before being rescued has a more terrifying tale to say when""nearly 1,000 Tigers led by children and women attacked Thandikulam....!" (Indian Express, June 13).

"He was just about to get some sleep,after finishing his night sentry shift at the police bunker on the main Vavuniya-Kilinochchi road, when he heard the sound of children talking. He and the other two constables at the post peeked out, **and what they saw froze their blood: rows upon rows of children in fatigues, firing laser bullets as they advanced towards their checkpost which was flanked on either side by army bunkers..**

"When the constables shouted across to the soldiers to alert them, a panic-stricken voice shouted to everybody to keep their heads down. Everyone hit the road, the bullets kept coming and the voices grew louder and during a lull in the fighting, those-who had survived it, scrambled up the mud bunds on either side of the road and fled.

"It was every man for himself. There was no time to think about anyone else", Bandula said. He hid himself under a huge heap of dried leaves under a neem tree. One of his colleagues had disappeared, the other one was shot dead when he ran towards a group of men after they hailed him in Sinhalese.

"After taking over the area, the Tigers set fire to the ammunition dump. **"There were lots of women cadres walking about as if they owned the place.** I don't know how they did not see me, if one of them had stumbled on the leaves, I wouldn't be here now", he said."

And that, children, is the story of the battle of Thandikulam. Hardly a battle, eh?

And so much for sugar and spice!

S.S

International

"A dead man should not be above earth. He should be buried in earth".

- Russian President Boris Yeltsin advocating moving Lenin's mummified body from Red Square and giving it a Christian burial.

* * * * *

"A criminal in uniform is more dangerous than any other kind of criminal...I'm against terrorists, in and out of uniform".

- Justice A.S.Bains, the best known Human Rights activist in Punjab, India.

* * * * *

"Though we have raised you for this moment of departure, and we are very proud of you, part of us longs to hold you once more as we did when you could barely walk".

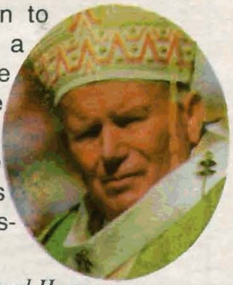
- President Clinton in an emotional send-off to his daughter Chelsea before she joins Stanford University in California.

* * * * *

"My formula for 100 per cent peace of mind is 25 per cent money, 25 per cent health, 25 per cent social life and 25 per cent family life".

- Philosopher buffoon of Hindi cinema, "Johnny Walker", quoted in OUTLOOK weekly.

* * * * *



"Every return to Poland is like a return under the roof of the parental home, where every little object reminds me of what is closest and dearest"

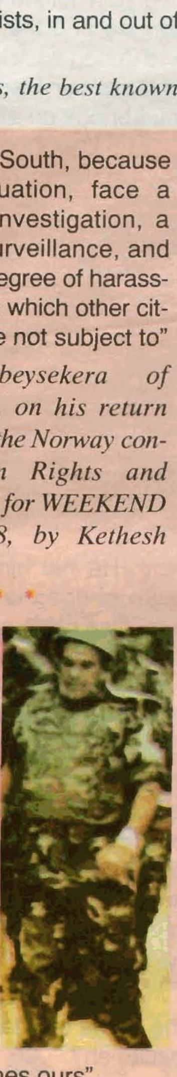
- Pope John Paul II, on his recent visit to his homeland, Krakow, Poland, his seventh visit since he became Pope.

* * * * *

"All Tamils in the South, because of the security situation, face a greater degree of investigation, a greater degree of surveillance, and inevitably a greater degree of harassment and intimidation which other citizens in the south are not subject to"

- Charles Abeysekera of INFORM, Colombo, on his return after participating at the Norway conference on Human Rights and Refugees interviewed for WEEKEND EXPRESS June 7-8, by Kethesh Loganathan.

* * * * *



"Our troops fought so gallantly and killed every terrorist that crossed the Forward Defence Line. Some damage would have been inflicted on the camp, but the counter attack on the enemy will be remembered by them as long as they live. The casualties on the terrorist side should be ten times ours".

-"General" Anuruddha Ratwatte in an interview with the DAILY NEWS, June 11, just after the LTTE counter-offensive at Thandikulam, causing the government heavy loss of men, material and morale

* * * * *

"...The Deputy Defence Minister's euphoric statement (referring to the above) belies the tragic magnitude of the event in its human perspective. Perhaps, when the Minister spoke out, the full extent of the event may not have been known to him...."

- Editorial SUNDAY TIMES, June 15.

* * * * *

"When the Action Group of Tamils in Colombo (AGOTIC) met the TULF representatives in May, Anandasangari asked how sure the AGOTIC was about Krishanthi Kumarasamy rape to blame the army. When Nadarajah (a member of AGOTIC) mentioned that 6378 Tamil civilians were killed by the army between 1983 and 1992, Anandasangari said most of those who died were Tamil civilians killed by the Tigers. The above statements are very serious statements derogatory to the interests of Tamils made by a senior and long -standing politician who is described as senior vice-president of your party ....

- "shocked and angered" members of the AGOTIC in a letter to the TULF President.

* * * * *

"The element of surprise has always been the LTTE's strong point. Prabhakaran will not let it go despite the unprecedented calamity that "Jaya Sikuru" has created in the Wanni. One of the central problems the Sri Lankan State faces in prosecuting the Eelam war has been its inability to make him panic."

- columnist TARAKI, writing in the SUNDAY TIMES, of June 8, two days before the LTTE pulled off its surprise onslaught on Thandikulam.

* * * * *

"It is a set-back, there are no two words about it... Now they (soldiers) have to worry about their rear when pushing forword"

-Retired Airforce chief Harry Goonatilleke on the army's Thandikulam debacle.

* * * * *

A SILENT TRAGEDY IN SRI LANKA

Sri Lankan War and Genocide Against Tamils is the Best Kept Secret of Recent Times - declared *Ms. Erna Gans*, President of the Holocaust Foundation of Illinois, & a Holocaust survivor at a public conference held in Chicago, USA, on June 1, 1997.

A broad spectrum of scholars, human rights advocates, non-governmental organizations caring for refugees and the displaced, legal experts on self-determination, interfaith spokesmen representing the Jewish, Hindu, and Christian religions participated in a public meeting which focused on the theme, ' Plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka - A Silent Tragedy ' . They described the ongoing war waged by the Sri Lankan Sinhalese on the Tamils of Sri Lanka as a war without witness, and the resulting tragedy as the best kept secret of the 1990s. They broke the silence and pleaded for the world and people of conscience to speak up and get involved to stop this tragedy immediately. A resolution to this effect was unanimously approved by the audience.

CHICAGO, JUNE 1, 1997: A well attended, three hour public meeting was held on the evening of June 1, 1997 at Nordic Hills Resort, 30 miles west of Chicago, USA. The event broke the silence on the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka with 15 speakers from the US, Canada, Sweden, Sri Lanka and the UK , along with uncensored multimedia presentations using video, overhead projections, and photographic exhibits of Tamil death and destruction by Sri Lankan state terrorism. Well over 250 people of Tamil origin and Americans of non-Tamil origin, including 15 Sinhalese, participated in the meeting which was sponsored by the Midwest Tamil Sangam and co-sponsored by the International Tamil Language Foundation, the Federation of Tamil Associations of North America representing over 30 Tamil Sangams in the USA and Canada, and the World Tamil Organization with chapters in the US, India and the UK.

COLONIAL RULE BRITISH
PLIGHT OF TAMILS IN SRI LANKA
-A SILENT TRAGEDY
CEYLON
SRI LANKA
TAMIL EELAM

Chicago conference on plight of Tamils

The highlight of the evening was the speech by *Mrs. Erna Gans* (a Holocaust survivor), President, Holocaust Foundation of Illinois, USA who was introduced by *Mrs. Kannaki Viswanathan*, President, Midwest Tamil Sangam, after her welcoming remarks. Mrs. Erna Gans, in her speech, herself a holocaust survivor, compared her experiences of holocaust with that of the suffering of Tamils today. She expressed surprise that in this day and age, the rest of the world is not paying much attention and termed the Tamil tragedy and the current Sri Lankan war on Tamils as a war without witness and the best kept secret of the '90s. She pleaded all to break this silence and speak up, take note and stop this pain and suffering of the Tamil people. She implied that, as much as Jewish people were persecuted for simply being Jewish, now the Tamils are being subjected to similar schemes.

TAMIL SINHALA
UP TO 1505
2 PEOPLE
2 NATIONS
1505-1833
2 PEOPLE
2 NATIONS
1833-1948
COLONIAL RULE BRITISH
PLIGH
IN SR
-A S
TRA

(from left): Mrs. Vasantha Babu, Mrs. Erna Gans, Vasantha Raja, Ms. Katie Hope, AL. Rammohan

The event was moderated by *Mr. Rammohan,* President of the Tamil Language Foundation, who kept the flow and quality of the program at a professional level. Following the lighting of the two, six foot, ten flame traditional lamps by *Mrs. Erna Gans* a beautiful poem glorifying peace and inner light, written by a Tamil mystic, the 11th century Karuvur Thevar, was sung by *Mrs. Geetha Kandasamy.*

Mr Alagappa Rammohan, Director, International Tamil Language Foundation, USA:

Mr Rammohan outlined the history

of Tamils in Sri Lanka and pointed out how, historically, the Tamils and Sinhalese nations were once independent before and during colonial rule. He brought into focus how the two people were administered as one entity for administrative convenience by the British from 1833 till independence in 1948. He stressed the fact that the Sri Lankan Sinhalese are the ones who have unilaterally changed the country from a pluralistic, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-language Ceylon to a Sri Lanka based on one Sinhala language, one Sinhalese people, one Buddhist religion at the expense of the Tamils, and pointed out that the present conflict is only a prelude to the birth of the Tamil Eelam nation in the future.

Mr. Vasantha Raja, Former Chairman of Sri Lanka State Television & Head of the Sinhalese BBC Program, UK:

Mr. Raja was introduced as a "man of conscience", who had resigned his comfortable position in order to expose the hidden agenda of the Sri Lankan government. He traced the Tamil-Sinhala relationship in Sri Lanka, their historical evolution in clearly demarcated areas and the birth of the freedom struggle. He pointed out the invalidity of the 1972 and 1978 constitutions and that the problem would be solved if both nations reverted to their pre-independence status. He stated that most Sinhalese had a Sinhala/Buddhist psyche, which he referred to as the *'Mahavamsa Mindset'* (a reference to a sixth century chronicle by a Buddhist monk). The "Mahavamsa Mindset" proclaims the island of Sri Lanka as one that belongs only to the Sinhala-Buddist people and insists that everyone else can coexist with them so long as they assume the position of a "tenant" in a rented house. The mythical Mahavamsa text provides a rationale for present day leaders to galvanize political support by defining "Tamils" as a threat. Contrary to "tenant-landlord" hierarchy *Raja* demonstrated the relationship as that of two houses with their own landlords, however large the relative sizes may have been, which have coexisted over the centuries. The artificial unitary state established by the British 150 years ago, which involuntarily fused the two houses into one landlord system, has allowed the resurgence of the Mahavamsa mind set since independence. Raja concluded that the insurmountable suffering of Eelam Tamils can only be brought to a stop by achieving a two-household, two-landlord system. Permanent peace can flourish only after that. He hopes to see good faith mediation efforts by India and Western nations to resolve the conflict.

Mrs. Vanatha Babu, Midwest Tamil Sangam:

Mrs. Babu spoke about the sufferings of Sri Lankan Tamil women and their heroic transformation to responsible economic heads -of -household with equality, self-respect and dignity. She pointed out that in the de facto state of Tamil Eelam, caste and dowry systems have been abolished, and progressive social changes have been stimulated by the Tamil leadership.

Prof. Peter Schalk of the University of Upsala, Sweden:

Prof. Schalk spoke on ' The Human Rights Implications of Sinhala Buddhist Fundamentalism in Sri Lanka ' and mentioned that fundamentalism does not recognize the human and political rights of others. He said that Tamils have been wrongfully denied recognition as a 'people' with a right to self-determination, and that Sinhalese can only think of a unitary state under 'one umbrella'. He pointed out that the LTTE was not averse to peace talks, which took place in 1985, 1986, 1989/90 and

Mr. Sridhar Damle

Mr. Thani K. Cheran

Rev.Dr.S.J. Emmanuel

Prof. Peter Schalk

Mr.C.S. Baskaran

Mrs. Geetha Kandasamy

Mrs. Kannaki Viswanathan

Mr. Ilankumaran

1994 and that none of these collapsed due to the intransigence of the LTTE. The Swedish government's offer in 1995 to mediate was accepted immediately by the LTTE but turned down by the Sinhala government. Peter Schalk, who is a Tamil scholar and who has spent a lifetime of research on Buddhist theology, pointed out, for example, how the high ranking Buddhist monks and their organizations have altered the exit and entry vows the monks take to suit their present need for one state using the Sinhala language only, one religion that is Buddhism for one race, the Sinhalese. This corrupts the high ideals of the Buddhist cannon and ,thereby, creates ominous human rights implications for the non-Sinhalese, namely the Tamils.

The following resolutions were passed at the end of the conference:-

(a) stop the indiscriminate bombing, shelling and strafing of Tamil areas;

(b) stop the arrests, torture, rape and killing of innocent Tamil civilians;

(c) lift the embargo on food, medicine and other necessities;

(d) take care of refugees who have fled their homes by giving them adequate shelter, food and medicine;

(e) desist from interfering with refugees leaving by boat to India;

(f) permit NGOs to work in Tamil areas so that they may help refugees;

(g) allow journalists, both local and foreign, to visit the Tamil areas and report freely on the conditions there;

(h) cease further colonisation and settlement of Sinhalese in Tamil areas;

(i) desist from destroying cultivated and cultivable lands and forests;

(j) withdraw the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

(k) solve the national problem politically rather than pursue a military solution as the government is doing now;

(l) withdraw the army from Tamil areas, and

(m) negotiate with the LTTE (who represent the Tamil people and who are fighting the liberation war on their behalf) under third party mediation due to the tremendous amount of mistrust between the two nations as a result of five decades of acrimony and the resulting war.

Ms. Katie Hope, Researcher, The U.S. Committee for Refugees, USA:

Ms.Hope who visited Colombo, Jaffna, Vavuniya, and Sri Lankan Tamil refugee camps in Tamil Nadu and who co-authored the March 1997 report of the USCR titled "Conflict and Displacement in Sri Lanka " spoke on 'Rights of Refugees, Displaced Residents and their Sufferings and Sri Lankan Tamils '. She mentioned that the society in Jaffna peninsula today is militarized and referred to the terrible conditions in refugee camps both in Sri Lanka and India. She mentioned that more than 50,000 Tamils have died, over 1.2 million Tamils had been uprooted from their homes and that there are 900,000 who were internally displaced, with nearly 750,000 displaced living in the Vanni area. Many have faced multiple displacements and this has had a traumatic effect on the psychology and education of children.

Questioning of refugees in India revealed that they had left Sri Lanka because of fear for their security, lack of food and concern for the education of their children, and that they were not forced to flee by the LTTE as claimed by the Sri Lankan government. The Sri Lankan government was not helping the people in need, and the LTTE was not in a position to help them either she said.

War without Witness Video Presented by *Mr. Ilankumaran*, VP, Chicago Tamil Sangam:

Mr. Illankumaran introduced an uncensored video presentation capturing the sufferings of civilians and refugees, and the result of indiscriminate bombing and shelling by the Sri Lankan military. These video tapes were smuggled out of the Island at risk by individuals who helped the outside world become aware of the war crimes committed by Sri Lankan government behind the news blackout. The video captured the aftermath of the Navaly Church bombing in July 1995 in which 121 Tamil people perished instantly. It also showed moving scenes of 500,000 civilians fleeing the military onslaught on Jaffna in Oct. 1995. The audience was aghast at witnessing the level of cruelty committed by the Sri Lankan government while claiming to liberate the people from the Tigers!

The Very Rev. Dr. S.J. Emmanuel, Vicar General, Catholic Church of Jaffna, Sri Lanka:

Dr. Emmanuel's subject was ' Witness to the Silent Tragedy of the Tamils '. Rev. Emmanuel, who has lived in Jaffna, was part of the 'EXODUS' from there. He was himself displaced several times along with the other civilians . He made a very moving speech about their experiences. He also spoke of the more than four decades of oppression of Tamils by the Sinhalese. Only "Truth will Free Us" he proclaimed, appropriately, after the audience had seen the uncensored video clips showing the untold suffering of the Tamil people that is being kept a secret from the civilized world. His speech riveted the audience's attention. Instead of enjoying his life of retirement relaxing, he has taken on this extraordinary task of traveling worldwide to tell the people the truth.

Mr. Sridhar Damle, Friends of India Society International:

Mr. Damle talked on 'The Sri Lankan Tamils' Hindu Identity and What is at Stake?' He declared that he had learned a lot about the Tamil plight by just listening to all the other presentations. He brought to the surface the silence of the media, the involvement of certain countries, the role of organized religions, etc. as obstacles to finding a lasting solution to the problem in Sri Lanka. However, he said after the bitter memories of the India/Pakistan separation he simply could not conceive another separation in the region as an Indian himself.

Ms, Barbara Jackman, Solicitor & Barrister, National Security Law, Canada:

Ms. Jackman pointed out that, in accordance with the Geneva conventions and additional protocols, the Tamils are a "people" with the right to self determination and may engage in armed conflict in exercise of that right. She built a convincing legal argument for the Tamils of Eelam to have a nation of their own, based on their right to self-determination. She is representing a landmark case in Canada supporting a Tamil community leader who has been put in prison, accused of violating a recently enacted "draconian" law aimed against recent immigrants. In due course, she said that she has gotten to learn so much of Tamil history that she may even consider retiring in Jaffna to teach history to Tamil people! (laughter). Tamils have a distinct culture, language and homeland and their national identity has been expressed through many forms. The international governments which are helping the Sri Lankan government, that has a an incriminating record of war-crimes, must instead help the LTTE to achieve their legitimate Tamil homeland. International laws allow Tamils to claim a nation of their own (strong support from audience) .

Throughout the speeches the Sri Lankan government's policy of using food and medicine as weapons of war, the perpetration of genocide, the scorched earth policy followed by the military, and the need to hold a war crimes tribunal against the persons involved were frequently emphasized. A resolution appealing to the world's governments and the world community to ensure that the government of Sri Lanka ceases its atrocities and its pursuit of a military solution and agree to a political solution with third party mediation was proposed by *Mr. Thani K. Cheran*, President, World Tamil Organization and passed unanimously. The meeting was finally concluded with satisfaction.

Cyprus, the divided Island: U.S. to initiate settlement

WASHINGTON (AP) - Richard Holbrooke, key architect of the 1995 accord that ended ethnic war in Bosnia, is taking time off from Wall Street to try to frame a settlement between ethnic Greeks and Turks on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus.

Returning to the Clinton administration as a part-time special envoy, Holbrooke will take a highly personal style of rigorous diplomacy to leaders of the two feuding communities who have agreed vaguely on a federation but remain far apart on details.

These include whether Turkey will withdraw the 35,000 troops it has deployed on 37 percent of the island along with an estimated 80,000 settlers from the Turkish mainland. Only Turkey recognizes the independence of a state Turkish Cypriot leaders declared on northern Cyprus.

Cyprus is made even more complicated for American peacemakers because Greece and Turkey, sometimes-feuding NATO allies, tend to line up in support of their ethnic brothers in the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities.

The Holbrooke-led Bosnia peace talks near Dayton, Ohio, in 1995 resulted in separate Serb and Muslim-Croat republics in the Balkans country, while maintaining a central government in Sarajevo. The solution was described by some as a form of partition.

Cyprus President Glafcos Clerides called Holbrooke ``a tough and capable career diplomat" and added: ``I do not underestimate our own capabilities."

Clerides said in a statement in Nicosia that he has no ``such fears" of a Dayton-type solution for Cyprus. "Perhaps others may have," he said.

Cyprus also has proposed demilitarizing the island. With a population of about 650,000, Cyprus spends an estimated $3 million a day maintaining its army and buying weapons.

``We have forcefully made our concern known to both governments," Clinton said in a report to Congress on the lack of progress toward a negotiated settlement.

A 1,200-strong U.N. force controls the island's 103-mile-long demarcation line.

Holbrooke's assignment signals the Clinton administration's intention to make the complex 23-year-old partition of Cyprus a top foreign policy item in the second Clinton administration. The 1974 Turkish invasion, on the ground that Turkey had to protect the Turkish Cypriots, followed two decades of ethnic unrest on the island and a Greek-supported coup in Nicosia.

"Jaya Sikurui": The politics of desperation

by Ajith Rupesinghe

It is now more than two years since the outbreak of the third stage of the civil war between the Sri Lankan State and the LTTE.

Although the government promised a quick and decesive military victory over the LTTE, events have proven otherwise. The war has turned out to be as destructive as ever before with the likelihood of being dragged into yet another stage of protracted conflict. The Mullaitivu and then the Vavinitivu debacles had provided indisputable proof of the fact the LTTE continues to retain a most formidable military capacity to hit back-both in the North and the East.

Inspite of this, the government is hell-bent on waging war. The "Jaya-Sikuru" military campaign is the latest adventure. Already it has cost tremendous hardship with mounting casualties on both sides and thousands of the pooerest being displaced.

The mounting number of human casualties, the incredible sufferring of the people, the military debacles, do not seem to provoke any reassessment of the governments strategy of imposing a political settlement through military means. All the lessons of the past seem to have been lost in the din of a shameless jingoism spurred on by arrogant generals .

First came the occupation of Jaffna-possibly the most innane military decision of all time. The late General Kobbekaduwa had resisted this type of adventurism, but the new generals were hell bent on proving their manhood on the battlefield.The occupation of Jaffna has driven a widening barrier between the Tamil community and the State and fuelled the aspiration and justification for a separate state of Tamil Eelam as nothing else had done before. The aspiration for a separate state has arisen as a result of the pitiful inability of the Sri Lankan State to address the issue of national self-determination of the Tamil people in the North-East-which the adventurism of the new generals has compounded so recklessly.

“Shameless jingoism spurred on by arrogant generals”

The international community has played a criminal riole in covering up for the PA government. It has condoned the virtual censorship and the imposition of a nationwide emergency. It has condoned the human rights violations, the indiscriminate bombings, the degrading harassment of civilians. Some of these countries continue to supply the most modern weapons of high-tech mass destruction to the PA government, including torture equipment.

The US has sent its crack elite military advisers to train the Sri Lankan security forces in the art of genocidal war.The US has declared the LTTE to be a terrorist organisation which should be dealt with militarily. The US state department has even accused the LTTE of rape-which is a gross and malicious lie.In any case, it is the height of the most cynical hypocrisy for the US government to denounce terrorism with its unparrelled record of the most brutal aggressions across the globe and its open support for the most terroristic regimes in the world.

India has played a deadly game of chess in trying to manipulate the Tamil national liberation struggle to get a strategic foothold into Sri Lanka and the Nortrh-East. Its objective is to entrench a servile Tamil leadership in the North-East as a means of gaining a strategic foothold on Trincomalee and the region and to co-opt the national democratic aspirations of the oppressed Tamil people of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. Through funding and fuelling the war against the LTTE it is also creating a dependent vassal state which it can then manipulate for its regional ambitions.

The people of Sri Lanka have become the hapless victims and pawns in the deady game of these international players.The people in the North-East have been, once again, made to suffer untold suffering and destruction and the antagonism between them and the State has intensified as never before. Sinhala soldiers from the poorest families are the cannonfodder for the hunt. Recently some 225 police officers abandoned their post and refused to be used as cannonfodder when the government tried to establish a police post in an ancient Tamil village on the Vavuniya-Mannar road-which the state had even renamed 'Sapumalgama'. It is these policies of naked aggression and subjugation that have brought about the struggle for a separate state-and not just the alleged intransigence of the LTTE.

The economy is on the verge of collapse. Cost of living is escalating

day by day. Unemployment and inflation is rising to unprecedented heights. Millions of poor farmers and fishermen are being driven out of the so-called private sector driven/ open market economy with nothing to fall back on. Democratic norms have been buried under the dictatorship of a virtual censorship and a nationwide Emergency backed up by still more draconian laws such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Elected Provincial Councils have been undermined. Local elections have been brazenly rigged using state terrorism.Trade unions are being marginalised as never before to pave the way for super exploitation of the workers by foriegn predators. The Executive Presidency has been further entrenched and become more capricious. And the war continues to bleed the country economically and morally while offerring fertile ground for regional and international powers to sink their teeth into the economic, political and cultural lifelines of our society as never before. Sri Lanka has become a puppet neo-colonial state where even its national security interests are being dictated to by foreign and regional powers.

The UNP bides its time untill the PA government proves itself to be worse criminals than the previous reginme.This is the choice offerred to the people after fifty years of this five star democracy.The JVP wants to prove that they alone can militarily destroy the LTTE, while the MEP has slided into the pit of political bankruptcy by opposing any form of devolution of power to the Tamil nation. These narrow political trends that lust for war are all playing into the hands of the international powers and the Sri Lankan State. They place themselves in irreconciliable opposition to the progressive, democratic and patriotic aspirations of the people of Sri Lanka.

The LTTE had sufferred a tactical set-back with the loss of Jaffna. Yet, they have managed to retain and even amplify their fghting capacity. They have expanded their area of military operations into the Valigamam area itself, Mullativu, the East, the North West and Colombo. Although the Tamil people have acute contradictions with the LTTE for its undemocratic and terroristic methods, they have abiding respect for the LTTE as the only force thet has stood firm against the aggressions of the IPKF and the Sri Lankan State.

The LTTE has repeatedly called for a resumption of negotiations with mediation on the basis of restoring the staus quo that prevailed before the resumption of hostilities.

Are we to grasp this opportunity and establish a negotiations modality that would introduce the requisite professionalism to ensure a just and lasting peace, OR shall we continue to capitulate to the dictates of foreign powers and to the generals and be passive spectators to the rape and pillage and the steady destruction of our existence as a modern civilised nation?

The Jaya-Sikuru military campaign is supposed to drive the LTTE to the jungles and open the Vavuniya-Killinochchi road. But, time and again, the LTTE has proven that it will adopt classic guerrila tactics to confront these conventional offensives. They will put up stiff resistance, but they will rely on a protracted strategy of drawing the security forces deeper into their territory so that the LTTE may harass and attack at will. The LTTE can better afford to wage this type of protracted war of attrition since it is a small guerilla army while already the state has to bear the cost of maintaining some 110,000 troops- not to mention spiralling costs of arms and eqiupment. So what is this highly flouted military campaign about. Like beforte, it is simply the politics of desperation of a beseiged and bankrupt government that has reneged on ALL its pledges to the people and is now using war to simply hang on to power.

A;l progressive, democratic and patriotic forces should study this question deeply and unite to give sustained expression to the will and aspirations of the people for a united, independent, democratic and prosperous Sri Lanka.

[Ajith Rupesinghe is the National Organiser, National Peace Counsil.

The views expressed in this article are those of the author's and not of the NPC].

Pro-govt Tamil groups feel frustrated

Five former Tamil militant groups who are based in Colombo and helping the government to wage war on their own Tamil people have now reached a political dead-end.

An alliance of these groups comprising the EPDP, PLOT, EPRLF, EROS (a splinter group) and TELO have written to President Kuma ratunga and Constitutional Affairs Minister G.L.Peiris, expressing displeasure over the government's apparent indifference in finding a negotiated political settlement to the ethnic conflict

They have pointed out that they gave up the armed struggle and joined the"democratic mainstream"in response to an appeal by the government. They had faith in the negotiation process . but now they were disappointed. Even the proceedings of the Parliamentary Select Committee were bogged down. A spokesman for the EROS group told Colombo's MID-WEEK MIRROR that they feared they were being "taken for a ride".

Although they claim to have joined the democratic path, some of these Tamil groups are armed by the government , and the PLOT group works with the Sinhala army.

May 14

Humanitarian crisis looms

Many thousands are fleeing at the start of Sri Lanka's latest military assault on the northeast Tamil population. Omanthai and Puliyankulam - both Tamil civilian centres - are scenes of devastation, with hospitals, public buildings, commercial centres and homes torn to the ground by heavy artillery fire from advancing Sinhala forces. MI24 helicopters and tanks are smashing up everything in their wake. The firing is intense, indiscriminate and remorseless. The offensive is calculated to generate refugees, destroy Tamil property and engender ecological disasters in the Tamil homeland by the systematic destruction of vegetation. Civilians meanwhile have scattered in all directions with thousands forced to take refuge in unsafe jungle terrain. A humanitarian crisis is looming and set to worsen, with children and the elderly at particular risk. The international community's response to the impending disaster is yet to be seen as Sri Lankan troops prepare to continue further into Tamil territory. The bombing is continuing unabated...

LTTE attack in Jaffna

LTTE forces attacked a mini army camp and radar station in Allapiddy (near Jaffna town) early this morning, killing more than 5 Sri Lankan soldiers. The radar station was totally destroyed and the camp was overrun. One LTTE fighter lost his life.

Six fishermen killed

Sri Lankan Kfirs yesterday thundered across Mullaitivu's coast killing six Tamil fishermen and injuring another seven. Two of the dead were a father and son, and four of the injured are still in a coma. Yesterday was the second successive day of air attacks on Mullaitivu's fishing community in which innocent fishermen have been singled out by Sri Lankan warplanes.

May 15

Govt.ignores ICRC plea

Under cover of a strategic army offensive, the co-ordinated slaughter of Tamil civilians all over the Tamil homeland by Sri Lankan (Sinhala) forces has intensified. The Chandrika government is blatantly violating the ICRC's plea last Thursday to protect civilians with respect to the humanitarian law of armed conflict.

3 children among killed

Army shelling from Manal Aru (Weli Oya) in the East has so far killed 5 Tamil civilians in Nedunkerni. Three of the dead are children, and two of these were sisters. A pregnant woman - P. Supathira - is also among the dead. Shrapnel ripped open her stomach and she later died in hospital from her wounds. Meanwhile, the mother of the two dead sisters - Vithusa (3) and Nivetha (2) - is inconsolable.

War Diary
MAY, JUNE

LTTE attack in Jaffna

Sri Lanka's military forces have deliberately set a northwestern Vanni jungle on fire. The motive is to cause permanent damage to the Tamil homeland's ecology. At 10.25 yesterday morning Sri Lankan Kfirs dropped a wide circle of incendiary devices in Villankulam's jungle region, triggering the blaze. The fires are still raging and spreading uncontrollably with no facilities available to extinguish them. Wild animals have joined the dash for safety along with residents.

Refugee exodus in Mullaitivu

Thousands of Tamils are on the move away from Mullaitivu's outskirts and scrambling towards interior villages to escape continuing vicious sea and air attacks from Sri Lanka's navy and airforce. The past 48 hours have seen a fleet of navy gunboats blasting the coastal villages of Alampil and Semalai, which are now deserted and uninhabitable. Cannonfire is now being directed deeper into the interior. Meanwhile two Tamil villages - Puliyankulam and Omanthai - on the army's route from Vavuniya are under intense shelling from the military base at Vavuniya and facing overhead bombing from Sri Lanka's airforce for the second consecutive day. Civilians have been forced to flee further into the Vanni interior

Hospitals unable to cope

Without proper medical supplies and severe staff shortages, Tamil hospitals are having to cope with an influx of injured civilians from Sri Lanka's incessant bombardments on civilian centres taking place across the Vanni. The Mallavi and Puthukudiyiruppu hospitals are facing the severest crisis. There is no hope of them accommodating all the injured patients. Since Tuesday - when military attacks on Tamil civilians were stepped up - the amount of people arriving with bodily injuries has been phenomenal.

May 17

Second forest set ablaze

Two days after setting fire to a northwestern forest, Sri Lankan forces yesterday torched a second Tamil forest, this time the Kanakarayankulam forest (northeast of Puliyankulam). Pucarra bombers midday stormed over the forest and dropped incendiary devices at its northern and southern ends. Communities of Tamil people living in the forest are in panic. High winds have made their situation worse, sending the fire in all directions and greatly hampering their movement. Kanakarayankulam is vast and precious forestland. More civilian displacements are imminent. Besides the humanitarian disaster, the long-term ecological impact caused by the purposeful scorching of forests is considerable.

Civilians targetted

Sri Lanka's frustration at its lack of progress from Vavuniya is being vented against Tamil civilians with a newfound ferocity. The military seems more preoccupied now with maiming civilians than confronting LTTE forces. Army shells from Kilinochchi, Elephant Pass and Manal Aru continue to rain on residential Tamil villages, while MI24 helicopters and Kfir warplanes are singling out civilian centres across Vanni.

May 20

Farmlands scorched

In its latest military offensive Sri Lanka is pursuing a scorched earth policy. The lush farmlands of Omanthai, Puliyankulam and Nedunkerni are no more. Armoured vehicles and tanks have been deliberately tearing up paddy lands and banana plantations with a view to making them un-cultivatable. Not a single building or farmer's hut is left standing in these areas. They have either been torched or bombed out. The stench of dead cattle is every where. Sinhala troops have maliciously destroyed several million rupees worth of Tamil civilian property. Displacement is total in these areas.

In Omanthai alone 3500 families have been driven away. No effort has been undertaken to house the refugees by any organisation so far. But 330 families have found accommodation in schools - in Puthukudiyiruppu Maha Vidyalayam 107, Mullaitivu Maha Vidyalayam 108, Ananthapuram Vidyalayam 56 and Manthuvil Vidyalayam 59. The rest are languishing in jungles and roadsides away from the two main theatres of war.

Through Sri Lanka's military operations the last two years more than 650,000 Tamil civilians are internally displaced and most of them are living rough in the open. The government is preventing all NGOs from helping these refugees. Sri Lanka's ban on journalists prevents any of this whole scale devastation from being known to the outside world.

May 24

The Omanthai battle

20 Sri Lankan soldiers died and a further 75 were critically injured when LTTE forces put up stiff resistance to the army advance from Omanthai. The LTTE lost 6 fighters. In the same battle, LTTE forces completely destroyed two T-55 tanks and a troop carrier. A further two Sri Lankan battle tanks were damaged beyond repair.

Sinhalising Tamil area

President Chandrika Kumaratunga has declared that Manal Aru, a former Tamil area, is to become part of a Sinhala district, completing the Sinhalisation process begun by President Jayawardene. Manal Aru was once an exclusively Tamil area until Sinhala armed forces drove out the original residents to make way for Sinhala colonies. Jayawardene renamed the area with a Sinhala name, "Weli Oya". Chandrika has gone a step further by her announcement, setting the scene for a complete Sinhalisation of the Tamil region and its surroundings.

Assimilation continues

The process of assimilating Tamils and eroding their cultural/religious rights continues unabated in Trincomalee. The government has just banned Tamils from sprinkling ashes of their departed into the Trinco sea, an ancient Hindu religious rite. The order - issued by Trinco's Sinhalese government agent and enforced by the Sinhala military - has caused deep offence to Tamils.

Tamil youth taken away

A 22-year old Jaffna boy who was granted permission by the military authorities in Jaffna to go to Colombo has been arbitrarily arrested by Sri Lankan police in the capital city. Sepamalai Muthu Kulokus, an old boy of St Patrick's College (Jaffna), is presently an undergraduate at Jaffna university. He was visiting relatives in Dehiwala when police took him away. Many Tamils are routinely rounded up in this way in Colombo under the pretext of being LTTE suspects. These ordinary people lack the power to challenge the authorities and sometimes languish in jails for years without trial.

Food stocks abandoned

Precious food stocks belonging to Tamil multi-purpose co-operatives in Nedunkerni, Unchal Kaddy, Nainamadu and Paddikudiyiruppu have had to be abandoned as Tamil people flee from Sri Lanka's aerial bombing and artillery shelling of these towns. The value of food stocks left behind is incalculable. Detailed distribution lists had also to be abandoned in the rush. The occupying army is now in possession of the abandoned food supplies and also all the money left behind. 105 employees of these multi-purpose co-operative societies are untraceable, joining the ranks of the newly displaced. In Colombo, the government claims that the army had seized LTTE food dumps and the newspapers faithfully published that false claim.

June 02

3 more ghost towns

Sri Lankan forces - through heavy shelling - have created another three ghost towns in the Tamil Vanni - Mankulam, Puliyankulam and Kanakarayankulam. In the exodus away from these towns, thousands more people have been rendered 'homeless refugees'. They will be arriving soon in places already brimmed full with displaced people from all over Vanni. The army - stalled just north of Omanthai - has been pounding distant Tamil towns with long-range artillery. All three places were thickly-populated towns and it was only a matter of time before panic-stricken residents took flight. Sri Lankan authorities knew full well that a mass displacement would be the result. Therefore their strategy amounts to a wilful criminal act of war intended to disrupt civilian life. The Geneva Conventions regarding the protection of civilians are in no uncertain terms being violated. The news blackout keeps the international community (each time) blinded till after the destruction has been wreaked.

EPDP death squads

Government-sponsored EPDP terror-squads have carried out another killing in Jaffna. The victim on this occasion was the watcher of the Nedunthivu co-op stores, Arumugam. A boat used by the Tamil public was also stolen by the thieving gang. EDPD - like all Tamil groups bought off by the Sri Lankan government, are deeply resented in the Tamil homeland. Not only do they partake in the Sinhala army's torture of young men and indecent assaults on Tamil women, they help sustain to the illusion (internationally) that Tamil people are divided about the need for liberation. By their small-minded, cash-motivated support for the government, they do nothing but prolong the Tamil nation's urgent need for liberation from Sinhala forces.

June 08

Civilian terror continues

Mannar: Mortar and artillery shells launched by Sri Lanka from Thalladay onto Mannar's mainland have wreaked widespread damage in an all-too-familiar pattern. Houses have been knocked down, Tamil people displaced and their cattle slaughtered. Meanwhile, Sri Lankan navy gunboats continue to spread panic among Tamil residents with repeated cannonfire aimed at coastal towns.

Puliyankulam: Residential areas came under sustained attack when Sri Lankan Kfirs dropped powerful bombs and Sri Lankan artillery shells inflicted heavy damage on the town. Most people avoided injury by fleeing in time. However, they now join the ranks of the displaced, a category which is expanding by the hour.

Manal Aru (Weli Oya): Tamil civilians fled to safety Friday as artillery rained down on them at 2 in the morning, causing heavy damage to trees and property. The towns most affected by the shelling are Koddiawatha, Murippu and Poothan Vayal.

Sex kicks of SL army

Tamil women in Jaffna are having to face the indignity of being watched as they bathe or attend the lavatory. Armed Sinhala soldiers position themselves in places where they can see girls and women performing their daily functions. By an earlier army ruling all fences, walls and trees around Jaffna's houses had to be removed, ostensibly for security reasons. But Sinhala soldiers are using this new exposed environment to pursue vulgar sexual kicks.

June 09

Mankulam is flattened

Sri Lankan artillery fired from Omanthai has killed 7 Tamil civilians and critically injured 17 more in Mankulam's crowded town centre. The artillery shells were launched yesterday from what is a distance of over 18 miles. This attack like all others is an attempt to hurt Tamil civilians and wreck civilian centres. Nedunkerni was in the same way razed to the ground by Sinhala forces recently and it appears the army now has its sights on Mankulam. Buildings are flattened, and trees demolished. The massive exodus of Tamils from Mankulam in all directions is complete, as the Vanni's civilian population becomes ever-more destitute. The 17 people wounded so far in Mankulam are fighting for their lives without adequate medicines or even pain-killers to numb their pain, due to the ongoing medical embargo on Tamil areas.

June 10

Many thousands denied food

Sri Lanka is only allowing enough dry food to cater to 5000 of Mullaitivu's internally displaced Tamil families. This arbitrary figure - decided by the ministry of rehabilitation - leaves many tens of thousands of refugees in Mullaitivu without food. The ministry's decision to supply to only 5000 families was taken even though the government agent for the district handed over a detailed list of all the area's displaced people. This means the ministry of rehabilitation was well aware of the full food requirement of Mullaitivu, yet chose to ignore it.

June 11

Ratwatte's fabrications says LTTE

An LTTE press release says:-

Sri Lanka's junior defence minister Anuruddha Ratwatte is quoted in an AFP report (11 June 1997) as saying the LTTE yesterday pounded civilian areas killing 60 people. It should be noted that the allegation comes on the back of an overwhelmingly successful military strike by LTTE forces on a military camp in which Sri Lanka has suffered heavy troop casualties and finds itself in an extremely precarious situation militarily with regard to its latest offensive, "Jaya Sikuru". To cover up this disaster from the Sinhala people and the international community and also anticipating further military disasters on the battlefield in the coming weeks and months frantic efforts are being made by Sri Lanka's military high command to divert attention from troop casualties. One reliable diversionary tactic is to fabricate stories of "civilian casualties" directly following efficient LTTE attacks on military targets, which is what has happened in this instance. We categorically deny minister Ratwatte's baseless allegation of civilian casualties, independent verification of which is not possible owing to the government's ban on the international press from the war-zone. The

LTTE, for its part, is a liberation army committed to evicting foreign Sinhala forces from the ancient homeland of the Tamils. It has no interest in "pounding" civilian centres, which is rather the preoccupation of the Sinhala military, which continues to strike at Tamil civilian centres including Odduchuddan, Mankulam, Kanakarayankulam, Puliyankulam and Mulliyawalai. It is reasonable to expect that as the desperation of Sri Lanka's military high command heightens, many more frantic (and devious) fabrications are likely, to try and discredit the leadership of the Tamil independence struggle. Only the entry of western journalists into affected areas can deny Sri Lanka's military hierarchy this luxury of concocting false stories about the LTTE at will.

Parents of the disappeared desperate

Hundreds of Tamil parents of children recently 'disappeared' by Sinhala armed forces in Jaffna have sent a strong letter to president Chandrika Kumaratunga, asking to meet her face to face. These parents have found no avenues to get information about their missing sons and daughters, believed to have been tortured and killed by Sinhalese soldiers.

The government's Human Rights Task Force (HRTF) - ostensibly there to follow up on such cases was totally ineffective anyway, but has now actually closed down its Jaffna office and returned to Colombo, while the Sinhala military high command in the occupied peninsula refuses to discuss anything at all with the Tamil mothers and fathers. With no other options remaining, the parents have called on the president to intervene if she is sincere. Their letter further states that the government media has twisted and perverted their predicament, portraying their children as having gone abroad or joined the LTTE. Such false stories indicate an official cover-up by government authorities trying to hush up and wash their hands of these military crimes against Tamils.

June 12

27,000 Refugees starved

The Sri Lankan government says only displaced Tamils staying at 'well-known welfare centres' will be given food. That leaves out a staggering 27,000 Tamil refugees, who will face starvation. A communique issued by the commissioner for essential services and sent to Mullaitivu's government agent says that anyone who falls out of this official category will not be entitled to any help. Such people, according to the new ruling, will go without food as they do not fall into the government's designated category.

3 PLOTE gunmen killed

LTTE forces attacked PLOTE's headquarters, killing three cadres. Stationed near the Senkalady army camp, PLOTE's armed gang had instilled terror in the local Tamil population, extorting money and carrying out countless tortures and rapes. PLOTE is one of the Tamil groups Sri Lanka likes to hold up as "the democratic alternative"

Six checkpoints overrun

Sri Lanka's tenuous hold on the Jaffna peninsula is being progressively weakened as LTTE forces stage regular attacks on Sri Lankan military targets. Yesterday, six checkpoints and one mini army camp were demolished in Thenmaradchy.

Six soldiers killed

Six Sri Lankan troopers died when LTTE forces intercepted an army vehicle in Kinniyady (Batticaloa). After the attack, army reinforcements indiscriminately fired in revenge on civilians.

325 Sri Lankan soldiers died at Thandikulam

Despite junior defence minister Ratwatte's determined efforts to conceal military casualty figures the LTTE counted no less than 325 Sri Lankan soldiers dead after the Thandikulam battle. The entire Thandikulam camp has now been destroyed. The LTTE lost 80 LTTE fighters, 21 of whom are women, says an LTTE press release.

Tigers took the war nearer the Sri Lankan border.

Located five kilometres north of the border town of Vavuniya is Thandikulam, which marks the Sri Lankan military's Forward Defence Line. A 500-strong Tiger force , many of them young women, armed with Rocket Propelled Grenades, and a big arsenal of weapons moved into Thandikulam in the early hours ofJune 10 morning, broke through the Sri Lankan "defence lines",blasted ammunition dumps, smashed up a vital link bridge, crippled a helicopter gunship, killed or injured over 400 Sri Lankan troops, captured a few along with some valuable military hardware, and a stock of medicines. Unconfirmed reports say that among the captives taken prisoners were a Sinhalese army officer, a doctor and a few PLOT members. As to what happened to two 120mm artillery guns at nearby Nochchimoddai is not known, but because the Tigers had the Thandikulam-Nochchimoddai area for more than 36 hours under their control, it would not be a surprise if the guns were seized by them.

Air Vice Marshal (retd.) writing in the WEEKEND EXPRESS of June 21-22, commented:- "What baffles the experts is how, in the face of a frontal assault from two axes by two divisions numbering nearly 20,000 troops, said to be the biggest operation in this Eelam war, the LTTE, with less than a thousand cadres was capable of inflicting so much death and destruction in an area that was supposed to be heavily fortified, and which housed its brigade headquarters, and which was probably the best defended after Palaly in the North,and was overrun by cadres, whose frontline troops were "little girls", as mentioned by an injured soldier from his hospital bed in Colombo !

War-displaced Tamil family now in jail

An entire Tamil family consisting of a 35-year old woman, her husband and four children, displaced from Kilinochchi and who came to Colombo with the intention of starting a new life are now languishing in jails

In a fundamental rights application lodged in the High Court of Colombo, Mrs.Rajanimala Seevaratnam has submitted the following:

She is being held in the Women's section of the Welikade jail, along with two of her younger children, aged four years and nine months. Her husband is being kept in the Kalutara jail, and her elder two children aged 11 years and 8 years are being detained in a Salvation Army home in Borella.

Unable to live any longer in their family home in Kilinochchi following the Sri Lankan government offensive, she and her husband decided to move to Colombo. On the 21st November 1996, they rented out a house in Mutwal, Colombo, paying a monthly rent of Rs.5000/- and a 25-month advance of Rs.12 lakhs. One month later, on 28 November 1996, they were all taken into custody by the police alleging that they were supporters of the LTTE.

Although she was taken into custody on 28 November, she was not produced before the Colombo magistrate until January 17, 1997, on which day she was sent to remand jail. She was not told what the charges were. Instead, she was assaulted with S-lon pipes by policemen on the first two days.

When they asked the woman owner of the rented house, a Sinhalese for the refund of the advance money, she told them that she would refer the matter to the C.I.D.police. Most of her close relatives Mrs.Rajanimala said, live in foreign countries.

Stating that her arrest and detention was unlawful and illegal, and a breach of her fundamental rights, Mrs.Rajanimala has through her lawyer Paramasivam Sritharan appealed to Court to set her free.

When the application was referred to a 3-member Bench consisting of Justices Amerasinghe, Ananda Coomarasamy and Bandaranaike, the police asked for time to file the answer. The Judges ordered time till July 8.

Reuters man in Colombo will now work for SL government

Mohan Samarasinghe, correspondent of the Reuters news agency in Colombo is among five "communication experts" appointed by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Foreign Affairs to work as Counsellors in Sri Lankan missions abroad. Mr.Samarasinghe has been posted to Ottawa.

Others who have been appointed to project "a positive image of Sri Lanka" and "correct any misperceptions" about the country are Sugeeswara Senadhira of the WEEKEND EXPRESS, (Stockholm), Aruna Kulatunga, Corporate Communications Specialist working in Hong Kong (London), Vipula Wanigasekera, former Director, Marketing, Ceylon Tourist Board (New Delhi) and Ms.Rajika Jayatilleke (Bangkok).

Cuddling couples in park unnerve the police!

The Vihara Maha Devi Park in Colombo is a favourite haunt of romantically inclined young couples who seek privacy in its sylvan surroundings. But to the paranoic policemen of the Cinnamon Gardens police station,that is where danger lurks. A Colombo newspaper quotes senior police officers as saying that "there could be members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam behaving as if they were caressing couples", but in reality hiding bombs in the bushes!

Reasons why the police get the jitters are: Nearby Green Path is used by President Kumaratunga to drive between her residence and parliament; 2. the office of the Deputy Minister of Defence "Gen." Ratwatte is located near by.

U.K. Tamil couple held in Colombo

A Tamil couple living in U.K. who had gone to Sri Lanka on a visit was arrested in Colombo on June 11 and detained at the Kollupitiya police station. It was stated that the couple was seen around 5 p.m. on that day near "Temple Trees" behaving "in a suspicious manner", the euphemism normally used by the police to take in any Tamils without any evidence of any guilt.

"Temple Trees" is the official residence of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga.

It is reported that the police was in touch with the British High Commission in Colombo to ascertain background information on the couple. Inquiries are being made by a police squad headed by Inspector S.Pathirana of the Kollupitiya police.

Another Air Force plane falls

A two-seater Sia Marcheti aircraft of the Sri Lankan Air Force crash-landed in a paddy field south of Anuradhapura on June 14, killing the instructor Shanthilal Ratnapala and seriously injuring the trainee pilot. The plane was badly damaged.

The crash was the ninth this year, and the 17th since government resumed hostilities in April 1995.

France too offers training

To add to the number of countries offering arms and training to battle-battered Sri Lanka, France is the latest. Two Sri Lankan sailors have been taken on board the French supply and command vessel, "La Somme" when the ship called at Colombo recently. Although it would be a symbolic training lasting 10 days until the ship touches Djibouti, Sri Lanka has appealed for more naval recruit training.

Sri Lankan army runs short of manpower

Recurring battlefield setbacks and losses of lives are depleting the Sri Lankan army of manpower, forcing the government to go in for a fresh recruitment drive. While rural unemployment in the Sinhala south is very high and the salaries and perks offered by the government are attractive enough, enlistment has been slowing down in recent times.

The government is now engaged in a recruitment drive through slick TV and Press advertising. The physical and educational qualifications have been lowered, repeated amnesties are being offered to deserters, and men are selected on walk-in interviews. The idea seems to be to throw in as much gun fodder as possible taking advantage of the numerically superior Sinhala community, in comparison with the recruitment potential of the Tigers.

Former Air chief Air Vice Marshal Harry Goonetileke was quoted as saying, after the recent ThandikulamNochchimodai debacle "Recruitment could slow down after this latest debacle. This setback could be enough to alarm village parents.

He was also quoted as saying that government should introduce national service to overcome troop shortage. "Also, we should be thinking of women on the battlefront"

President Kumaratunga has also threatened to introduce conscription if necessary to get the required numbers. This is bound to send alarm signals to the urban youth and their parents who have been so far not affected by the war in another part of the country"

Boosting the fast depleting military transport

COLOMBO: In an effort to boost its fast depleting military transport aircraft fleet, carrying supplies to over 30,000 Sri Lankan troops deployed in the northern Jaffna Peninsula, Sri Lanka has entered into an agreement with a second private Kazakhstan airline company to fly more military cargo aircraft. saya a PTI report.

The decision was taken after Lion Air, the only private airline permitted by the Sri Lankan government to operate in domestic sector, refused to carry military personnel and equipment to Jaffna. Lion Air was operating two AN-32 aircraft leased from a Kazakh private company.

The airline was being used to carry civilians, armymen and supplies to the peninsula. This was in addition to the two AN-32 aircraft which the Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF) was operating with flight assistance from Ukrainian pilots.

Till recently, the strategic ``air-bridge," linking Colombo with Jaffna, went without much of problems as Lion Air flew six aircraft, each one making several sorties a day. The SLAF too had seven AN-32s providing the much-needed air cushion to the army.

Troops in Jaffna totally depended on both air and sea routes as the crucial land route, the Jaffna highway was cut off by the LTTE, for which the army is battling out for over a month to recapture it.

But the air-bridge came under severe strain as SLAF, dogged by poor maintenance of the planes, lost 22 aircraft in the past two years which included four AN-32s. Another AN-32 was grounded for repairs.

With only two Antanov working over time, pressure also began building up on the Lion Air, which was only the private air line which has cut the size of its fleet from six to two owing to pressures from the Kazakhstan government, army sources here said. -

Speculation was also rife that Lion Air refused to fly military cargo owing to threats from the LTTE as rebels shot two AN-32 of SLAF last year. So far, none of the Lion aircraft has come under attack from LTTE.

A Tamil's Journey into Exile in UK

The Guardian

in association with Amnesty International (UK)

no refuge

A journey into exile can be a perilous one. Refugees often find themselves at the mercy of human traffickers whose primary aim is to make money. Like cattle they can be herded into trucks or boats, often unsure of their destination and whether or not they will arrive alive. Others enlist the help of expert forgers, paying hundreds of pounds for false papers and then facing the risk of being caught by immigration officials before they even board a plane or a boat. Others simply run for their lives at a moment's notice, leaving behind families and homes as they head towards an uncertain future.

What is clear is that Western governments have made it increasingly difficult for asylum seekers, pushing most of them into the hands of racketeers and smugglers. There are no visas or passports issued on the basis of being a victim of persecution, and a journey into exile can often begin with a visit to a "travel agent" where false papers can be arranged.

It is also a costly business. According to some estimates, it costs around £5,000 to arrange for an asylum seeker to be smuggled out of Turkey, and £500 for false papers. These figures can double if you are trying to escape from a country like Sri Lanka, where asylum seekers are faced with longer, more complicated journeys to the West.

"My family sold everything for my passage out," says Anton a Tamil refugee now living in London. "It cost them almost £8,000 and has left them virtually penniless. I have not seen my family for almost eight years; that is the hardest part in living in London. Friends of mine have been killed; my mother died while I was in England. But I can't go back because I would be killed."

> *"The simple fact is that every single refugee is a direct consequence of a failure of government.*
>
> *If each government obeyed its own laws and honoured the UN Declaration of Human Rights, there would be no refugees.*
>
> *No-one wants to be a refugee. People don't want to be homeless any more than you do - tortured, murdered, raped, any more than you do...."*
>
> *(Amnesty International)*

Anton says that he had no choice but to flee. A student activist for Tamil rights, he faced arrest by the Sri Lankan authorities at a time they were mounting a harsh offensive in the predominantly Tamil area of Jaffna, in the north of the Island.

Then, he says, as splits occurred between Tamil guerrilla groups, Anton find himself on the wrong side. Either way, he says, he would have probably ended up being killed.

Hiding in a truck, during a time when Sri Lankan authorities were rounding up all young Tamils and accusing them of being guerrillas, Anton made it to the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo, a journey of more than 17 hours.

Once there, he remained in hiding and only ventured out to visit on of the dozens of "travel agents" that have sprung up in the city. They arrange package tours with a difference. "The agent takes care of every thing. You have to pay your money upfront and then remain in the house he finds for you, waiting for the papers and the flight out. There were 20 of us in a house, all young men. It was a terrible time. We were frightened of being caught by the police and worried about our families."

During his two months in Colombo, Anton had no idea which country he would end up in. The agent arrived one day, with forged papers and told Anton to prepare for his trip. Anton was lucky. At least his agent turned up. Agents, who demand money in advance, are known to cheat their clients knowing they have no rights and are unlikely to complain to the authorities.

From Colombo, Anton flew to Bombay, where he was detained and questioned for around five hours. He says he was slapped and kicked by immigration officials and accused of being a terrorist but was eventually released, and he continued on the next stage of his journey.

That took him to the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. Anton was met by another agent at the airport who took him and five others to a house, where they remained for the next four weeks. As in Colombo there rarely ventured out for fear of being caught by local police as their Ethiopian visas had expired.

"The boredom, the waiting and the uncertainty is probably the hardest part of any asylum seeker's journey. We didn't know which European country we were going to end up in or if the agent was going to cheat us", says Anton.

It was in the middle of one of the endless card games that kept the five young Tamils occupied that the agent arrived one day, passport and airline ticket in hand. Anton was given an Italian passport and told that he was booked on the next flight out to London. "The agent told me not to worry about airport officials at Addis Ababa because they had been paid. I was so scared about being stopped, I couldn't stop sweating and shaking. My biggest fear was that I would get caught and sent back to Sri Lanka."

Anton's tortuous journey, which took over three months and exacted its mental and physical toll, is typical of the experience of many asylum seekers. Anton eventually made it to London and applied for political asylum. Therein lies the start of another arduous journey.....

A better US role in Sri Lanka

(The Boston Globe, May 12, 1997)

The last years of the 20th century have witnessed a skein of ethnic wars within established or dissolving states. Bosnia, Rwanda, and Chechnya have become synonyms for crimes against humanity. But another ongoing ethnic bloodletting has escaped the attention of the global village: the campaign of the Sri Lankan government to liquidate once and for all the secessionist movement known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

It is not easy to apportion blame for the current warfare. The Tamil Tigers, who have history of vicious terrorism, resumed fighting after talks failed in April 1995, providing the government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga with a rationale for invading and occupying the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka, where most of the island nations 21/2 million Tamils live.

But whoever is at fault for starting the latest round of violence, civilians have been suffering unimaginable horrors. Half a million have been displaced. Many are dying of disease in refugee camps. At a recent UN human rights commission meeting in Geneva, the State Department lamented the unsolved disappearances of more than 700 persons in Jaffna, capital of the northern province, "and the slow progress made by the government in prosecuting security forces personnel implicated in human rights abuses."

If only for the sake of consistency, the United States should do more than lament in diplomatic language the killing, raping and uprooting of Sri Lankan civilians. If Washington can sanction the regimes in Burma, Iran and Iraq for their violations of human rights, the least it can do for Sri Lankans is to cease American military assistance to the Sri Lankan army. Although limited in scale, the US assistance has symbolic significance.

To help end the nightmare in Sri Lanka, the Clinton administration should actively support negotiations between the warring parties, preferably with a brokering role for an international third party. The goal should be a federal constitution permitting considerable autonomy for the northeast provinces.

Eritrea, 4 years after independence

"Traditionally, aid agencies and foreign governments have set their terms for assistance. Eritrea wants to change the rules. It wants aid only on its own terms ......
This independent stance has unnerved some aid agencies who are used to controlling their own projects. Eritrea even turned down proposed funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as the European Union (EU) because it did not agree with their conditionalities....

-Africa Today-May/June 1997

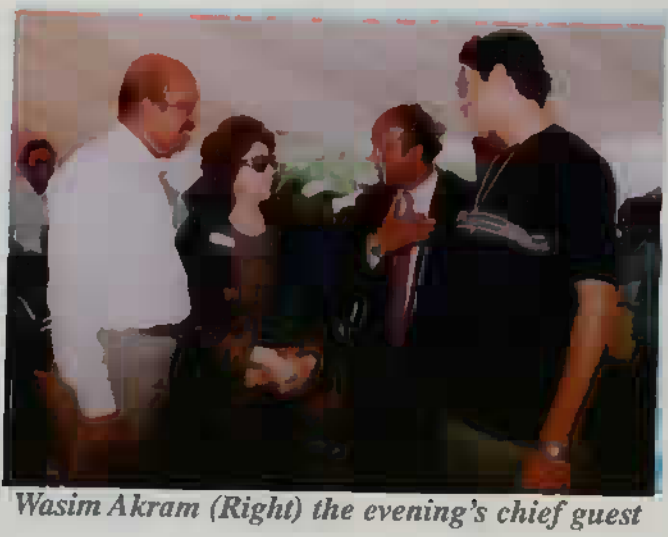
Tamil Cricket and Netball Festival

32 teams participate

Glorious sunshine provided excellent ambiance for a marvellous sporting event that has now become eagerly awaited amongst the Tamil population in the United Kingdom.

Yes, it was the annual Tamil Cricket and Netball festival held on the 26th May bank holiday at the Wadham Lodge sports center Walthamstow.

Twenty four teams representing their old schools participated in cricket and eight teams entered the netball tournament .



Wasim Akram (Right) the evening's chief guest

It was heartening to see school from all parts of our motherland. Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Vavuniya, Mannar and Jaffna taking part in the spirit of true Sportsmanship.

From the approach to the ground itself one could feel the meticulous planning and organisation of the event. Young boys smartly dressed in black and white uniforms guided the cars from the north circular road roundabout to the specially allocated car parks. There was a shuttle bus service taking sportlovers from the car park to the ground in comfort.

The ground was well prepared with allocated marquees for each participating old school, special marquee for important guests,

Before the prize-giving. Netball champions Ch[illegible] Convent are seen in the picture.

Jaffna Central, the champions

children's fun fair, excellent toilet facilities and most of all the incomparable delight to all Tamil tastebuds - The Tamil Eela "Unavagam" (food stall) was also there to satisfy the burning hunger of all those present.

Nasser Hussain the current English Test Cricket vice captain adorned the morning proceedings as the special guest. All the young cricketers were astounded by the charisma and courtesy with which Nasser posed for photographs with them signing autographs and shaking hands.

Nasser Hussain, English Test cricketer with one of the umpires

The opening ceremony brought sense of pride and a drop of heartfelt tear to the eye when there was pin drop silence amongst the thousands who had gathered to observe a minute silence to salute the brave brothers and sisters in our homeland who had sacrificed their lives to the course of the nation.

The lady Mayor of Walthamstow was the guest of honour at the opening ceremony. All the participating teams lined up under their college flags which were hoisted by their captains. The players being awarded with a commemorative medallion by their school presidents helped by small children was a special touch.

Matches were keenly contested and there were splendid displays of cricketting and netball talents.

Jaffna Central who beat St. John`s in the semifinals and Jaffna Hindu who beat Vaddukoddai Jaffna College met in the final. In a low scoring match Jaffna Central set a modest target of 42 runs in their allocated overs and Jaffna Hindu looked easy winners when they started their innings. But the centralists had a strategy of their own, with sharp and accurate bowling they pulled an impressive victory. In the final over requiring six runs to win Jaffna Hindu could muster only four runs and lost by the narrowest of margins, one run!

Jaffna Hindu, the finalists

The netball girls uplifted the spirits with their wonderful display. Chundikuli Girls college and Ilavalai Girls Convent came through to the finals. Both teams supported well by eager spectators, played courageously and with exceptional skill. Chundukuli Girls, champions of last year, triumphed again with their years of experience.

The highlight of the day was the exhibition match between the Tamil Eelam team and a Pakistani Invitation International team. The Tamil Eelam team was represented by Sanjeevan, Pratheepan, Prabaharan, Prabananthan and Vijeyanathan who were selected from last years competition and Shanthikumar and Sidharthan who are playing premiere league cricket in Canada. The International team captained by test star Rashid Latif emerged as winners by scoring the winning run in the last over to reach the Victory target of 93.

Pakistani test super star Wasim Akram was the distinguished guest for the evening proceedings. He delighted the crowd with his presence.

The awards ceremony was well arranged with excellent quality trophies engraved in memory of our fallen heroes who had dedicated their lives to the cause of national freedom.

A bat was auctioned amongst keen bidders, the attention then turned to who will take home the lottery prize of "Vauxhall Astra" which was drawn with the aid of a new software written by a Tamil brainchild. The lady luck favoured a lady winner as the car went to her under the watchful supervision of a Vauxhall representative.

tball matches in progress

The grand finale was a tremendous firework display. In all more than six thousand spectators were treated with an exceptional day's event leaving everyone yearning for the next years event.

- *Anandan*

A Journey Through Tamil Eelam

The sun came out in its splendour to cast its warm mantle on a throng of Tamil people in its thousands and their Asian and English friends, who had wended their way to the second annual Eelam Tamil Cricket Festival which was held on bank holiday Monday, 26th May 1997 at the Wadham Lodge Sports centre in London. The teams from the alumni of Eelam Tamil Colleges competed for sporting honours with great verve and distinction but always in the true character of Tamil camaraderie and portsmanship. The spectators were feted with traditional and delicious Tamil food and snacks that made most Epicureans among them reminisce about their mother's cooking and their sylvan village settings. Such splendid memories of the past were tragically interspersed all too often by the shared feelings of an intense and collecting suffering inflicted by the execrable Sinhala government upon our people in our homeland. It is sad metaphorically, that the battles of England were won on the playing fields of Eton and so it might also be claimed in our folklore of the future @ the battles of Eelam were won our playing fields where our esprit de corps and our resilience were forged.

TEEDOR (Tamil Eelam Economic Development and Research Organisation) joined in this festival by staging an exhibition of the Arts, Culture and Lifestyle of the people of Tamil Eelam. It was primarily intended to portray to our children a flavour of the inestimable quality of our history, heritage, tradition and homeland which is their birthright and which is theirs in trust to pass on to future generations.

The exhibition marquee was set up 'M sections which represented tableaux where Tamil children acted cameo parts in the practice and performance of the Hindu, Christian and Muslim religions which are firmly rooted amongst our people. There were

TAMIL INTELLECTUALS COME TO THE FORE

The Tamil Cricket festival held at the Wadham Lodge Sports Center on the bank holiday Monday of May 26th was memorable for not only the success of the tournament as a whole, but also for the technological exploits of young Tamil intellectuals.

It's not often that these tournaments feature fully integrated and computerised scoring systems. This tournament could, however, be proud of having such facility at its disposal and executed it with perfection. The scores from every single match played in the tournament was processed on to this software package which was especially designed for the occasion by young Tamil experts who had committed a lot of time and effort towards the project. The package was designed in such a way that it would encapture the statistics of all the players taking part in the tournament. The overall aim of the system was to enable the organisers to select the outstanding performers of the tournament. It made it easier for the organisers to select the best Batsman, Bowler and Player of the tournament on a day when there were a number of high quality performers.

Another area on the day where the technological benefits were exploited to its full extent was seen in the draw for the Raffle lottery. For the first time in a public event such as this, the draw was conducted by a computer. As thousands of spectators sat around in a semi circle and watched in amazement, the event unfolded with the computer selecting and displaying the winning number. However, there were many disappointed faces as they realised that the winning number displayed in large print did not belong to them. The one lucky winner was not at the ground to pick up her £10,000 worth car there and then. Overall, this was a memorable day for all those who were there.

- *Rahulan*

also very evocative cameo parts played by small children depicting the quintessential qualities of Tamil motherhood, cradling their babies in their arms, scraping coconuts, grinding chillies, and being 'mother' (indefinably so). Outside the house, other children played their parts another tableau showing fathers and older brothers and sisters at work drawing water from the well, irrigating their land and chopping firewood. It was indeed a microcosm of family life in Tamil Eelam and there were long queues of people waiting patiently outside the marquee to be taken on this sentimental odyssey through their homeland.

Most of the visitors complimented the organisers on the excellence of the exhibition and many requested that such 'jouneys' reflecting the sights and sounds of the culture, history and lifestyle of Tamil Eelam should continue to be developed and produced for the benefit of the Tamil Diaspora, specially for our young who may not be that familiar with the rich tapestry of our proud traditions and heritage.

- Ivan

Hitting the water pot: Fun game to collect funds for TEEDOR

The much-patronised Tamil Eelam canteen provided many traditional Tamil delicacies

Sri Lanka: Three Works of Fiction

Reviewed by Andy Higginbottom

These three books are works of fiction, and yet each in its own way confronts 'ways in which politics and imagination intersect'. What comes of this confrontation?

Introduction

Given the intensity of experience in Sri Lanka over decades of conflict involving tens of millions of people, and from the high level of literary culture of many driven into exile by that conflict, it was only a matter of time before significant works of fiction appeared in English depicting the lives and struggles of people on the island. Within two years there have been three critically acclaimed novels.

As a western reader I must say from the outset that I am grateful to the many insights that each of these books offer. And I believe that world literature benefits for these voices from 'the Third World'. That these are mirrors onto a reality has a special meaning, for that reality is otherwise unreported, the truth has been blocked off. Because factual documentary reporting of the conflict is prevented, these works carry the responsibilities of witness.

The Chilean playwright and novelist Ariel Dorfman, whose play Widows about disappearances recently toured Britain, wrote of his empathy with a fellow playwright:

'struggling with the same demons of expression, confronting ways in which politics and imagination intersect, how to depict suffering and repression without sinking into hopelessness, how to be colloquial and simultaneously mythical, how to show human resistance and resilience without being propagandistic or doctrinaire, how to recognise that we have the enemy inside and the best people are capable of the most terrible things'.

The story is told in the first person by Triton, who is placed as a servant while still a boy. 'I was 11 eleven years old. It was 1962: the year of the bungled coup'.

Gunesekera paints with a limited palette, describing the boy's feelings and activities around the house.

The effect is claustrophobic. we are discovering a confined space dealing with reflections of reality in the outside world.

Triton reveres his master Mister Salgado. Salgado, 'a product of modern feudalism', doesn't seem to do very much. Salgado's passion for oceanography and the life of polyps enlivens a rather lonely bachelordom. His pet thesis is that the reef is fast disappearing. '"It has survived aeons, but even a small change in the immediate environment - even su if you pee on the reef - could kill it. Then the whole thing will go. And if the structure is destroyed, the sea will rush in. The sand will go. The beach will disappear. That is my hypothesis. You see, it is only the skin of the reef that is alive. It is real flesh: immortal. Self-renewing." Mister Salgado threw up his hands, "But who cares?"'.

Is it only the reef that stands on the brink of disaster ?

Through meeting Miss Nili, Salgado acquires a social life, yet it is one of desperate hedonism. His science lies forgotten, and his project work to save the reef degenerates. Progress is halted. The political upheaval impinges through a character that is hard to fathom out, Wijetunga Mister Salgado's assistant, who suddenly blurts out his credo. 'He gripped my shoulder hard. "You know, brother, our country really needs to be cleansed, radically. There is no alternative. We have to destroy in order to create. Understand? Like the sea. Whatever it destroys it uses to grow something better."' This is the JVP.

Gunesekera uses other devices to portray the sense of a world about to be smashed apart. For example, the chilling story of the prince sent out to collect a thousand bleeding little fingers in a garland'. And yet we are still in Salgado's special separate world, inside the reef, about to be swept away. The ocean approaches and yet we do not understand it. When the waves of violence, ugly anti-Tamil violence crash down, they are reported from a safe distance.

The book ends wistfully in exile. Somehow we have never escaped the feeling of being one removed from the realities of life. A communist Sinhalese friend is sharp in his criticism of this book, he calls it *The Guardian* view of what Sri Lanka should have been like. A civil society, but one that in reality was completely insensitive to the sufferings on which its own privileged existence was based.

* * * * *

Funny Boy

Funny Boy is by far the noblest of the three novels. It too is narrated in the first person, but this time the reader is carried with much greater conviction that this is truly autobiographical. The author Shyam Selvadurai has an intense sensitivity that runs deep and true - throwing light on the whole society.

SHYAM SELVADURAI
FUNNY BOY

Arjie is born into a rich Tamil family in Colombo. From the age of 7 he gets teased for being a 'girlie boy'. While Arjie is comfortable with this (in fact he far prefers playing wedding games with the girls than cricket with the boys, especially if he gets to be the bride) it did not take long for his father to label him the 'funny boy'. Arjie becomes excluded from all the games, 'And then there would be the loneliness. I would be caught between the boys and the girls worlds, not belonging or wanted in either'.

Arjie's oppression as a gay boy drew him into the adult confidence of his young Radha Aunty and his mother. What we have here is at first site a domestic setting similar to Reef. But the strength of Arjie's friendships and his honesty takes us to the essence of Sri Lanka very quickly.

Radha Aunty is falling in love with Anil, a young Sinhalese man. This draws fierce opposition from both sets of parents. Arjie's great grandfather was killed in the racist pogrom in 1958. 'From then on I began to listen carefully to the conversation of the adults to discover more about the quarrels between the Sinhalese and the Tigers ... there was a group in Jaffna called the Tamil Tigers. They wanted a separate country and the Sinhalese were very angry about this'. Radha is sent north to Jaffna to 'cool off', but on the return journey she too is attacked and badly beaten by two Sinhalese men... She can no longer see Anil in the same way.

As Arjie is growing up, the story engages a stage at a time into a deeper and more troubling facet of the war. His mother 'Amma', Nalini renews her loving friendship with Uncle Daryl, a Burgher who works as a reporter for an Australian paper. He says he can understand why young Tamils join the Tigers and tells of the army's torture. The two argue. Daryl leaves for Jaffna, he is there when the police burn down the Library destroying 85,000 books. He disappears. Nalini tries to find out what has happened, the Colombo police threaten her off. Then Uncle Daryl's dead body is found. Nalini tells her sister "He didn't die by drowning. You know that. He was killed, then thrown into the sea". Amma urges an eminent QC to try and pursue the truth. "Let it rest, child", he tells her it is too dangerous. The family phone is tapped, 'It was strange and frightening to hear that click. I was reminded of the time a large family of rats lived in our house and we were never sure where they were hiding, from which cupboard or drawer they would jump out at us ...'.

This is a family of *rich* Tamils. Father does business and is opening a hotel, but this is attacked by the racists. Son goes to an elite private school and forms his first homosexual relationship with Shehan. Together they make a brave stand for friendship, bringing down the traditionally minded Tamil headmaster. But the consequence is to let in a radical Sinhalese new broom. Have the two friends done the right thing?

This is a family of rich *Tamils* . Their choices get narrowed turn by turn, and in the end they find themselves forced to consider emigration. The last chapter of the book is entitled Riot Journal: An Epilogue which details the family's experiences in the racist pogroms of July 1983, they leave the following month. One is left thinking of all those who could not leave.

* * * * *

When Memory Dies

Sivanandan first arrived in Britain as a refugee escaping the pogroms in 1958. Through decades of essay writing he has become an influential figure in what little passes for a socialist intelligentsia in Britain. The Independent describes him as 'one of the few political writers who really matter in this country'. The Observer's praise rose yet higher, 'As director of the Institute of Race Relations in London and the editor of its journal, Race and Class, for nearly 30 years, Ambalvaner Sivanandan has time and again demonstrated a prescience, originality and subtlety that have long been all too rare on the intellectual left.'

When Memory Dies
SIVANANDAN

Praise for Sivanandan's first novel has been similarly unstinting. The Observer reviewer evoked comparison with Tolstoy. The New Internationalist awarded it 5 stars for entertainment and 5 stars for politics. Indeed, When Memory Dies follows that line where 'politics and imagination intersect'. Clever and well written, it is the mature work of an experienced political thinker. Sivanandan strives to put together a broad historical narrative covering the major part of the 20th century in Sri Lanka, to collect and articulate the threads of memory. In fact When Memory Dies repeats many themes he has already raised - see especially Sri Lanka: A Case Study and The Heart is Where The Battle Is, both published in Communities of Resistance. In the novel, it is Sivanandan's politics that live through the imagined characters. That is its strength and, in the end, its shortcoming.

The novel is a substantial work of just over 400 pages, split into three 'books'. The first book is imbued with an optimism, the second tells of trust breaking down and the descent into racist communal violence. And the third about the search for a new way, riven with painful adjustments and confrontations.

Each book speaks with a different inner voice, yet all the time drawing us on and into the heart of the conflict. This is the talent of Sivanandan as a writer of fiction to give us this. Two themes run over and through each other, over and over again. How does each generation inherit and build on the memories of the last? And how do Tamils and Sinhalese live through their lives with each other?

* * * * *

Book One

From a Jaffna village to Colombo

Saha is a gifted Tamil youngster who comes from his village in the north to Colombo for his education. He joins the fringes of political opposition movements against the bosses and against the British colonial regime. Saha and his half-brother Para are introduced to socialism by S.W., a self-taught railway worker. This is the 1920s, the centre of gravity of the progressive movement is with the emergent working class in Colombo. S.W.'s own son-nephew Tissa is playing a leading role in the newly formed Ceylon Labour Union. The fiction weaves around the true historical figure of Goonesinha, whose Messianic trade unionism turned, through the good offices of the British Labour Party, into a dirty deal with the colonial regime. Goonesinha's betrayal of the national cause is captured by his refusal to stand for independence alongside the Indian Congress leaders. And this fatal division comes out at a human level by the union's refusal to back a Tamil worker who is then deported. These are deadly seeds of self-destruction. .

This book ends with the murder of a young Tamil at the hands of the British colonial police, and the defeat of the tramworkers strike in 1929. Hope, for the time being, has been destroyed

Book Two

The Second Generation

The second book is for the second generation. Covering the period from 1930 to 1958, Sivanandan vividly charts the contradictions and limitations in the post colonial settlement, and its corruption by Sinhalese politicians into a vicious ethnic 'democracy'. Saha has become a postmaster in the government service, and his family is able to accompany him to Kandy and Nuwara Eliya in the hills. We see conflicts within the Tamils, between Saha and his wife's bourgeois family; between the cruel overseers and the coolies on the plantations. Saha is all the time drawn back to the village, and Rajan his eldest son shares this sense of belonging, 'It had the feel of a real homecoming, not like going home to my parents but like bringing my home home'.

We follow Rajan through the school system to university, and then back to school as a teacher.

Education is a battleground of forces competing to shape the new generation. At the village school children of the plantation workers have to drop out, their parents cannot afford it. At the Catholic schools in Colombo Rajan hits religious and ethnic discrimination. The history and literature he learns is not that of his own people, but that of the British ruling class. And yet in English literature his love of poetry is awakened.

Like his father before, Rajan hovers on the edges of political commitment. His friends are involved in the hartal, a general stoppage of work against the UNP government's cuts in food subsidies and school meals. The government is forced onto the defensive, and even has to meet on ship in the harbour for its own safety. This is a crucial turning point. The Sinhala ruling establishment unleashes a counter-offensive, a sustained mobilisation to completely supplant any potential solidarity between the oppressed classes with communal sectarianism.

Through Lal, and his sister Lali, who are principled Sinhalese socialists, Rajan learns that the left wing LSSP party is about to succumb to the poison of communalism, as a means to securing seats in Parliament. Lal is fighting against this from within the LSSP, "you know what they are trying to do now... what they were talking about at the meeting today? About defeating the UNP at the next election. And you know how? By entering a no-contest pact with Banda and his patriots. And you know what that means? Communal politics again. There will be no Sinhalese in Parliament standing up for the Tamils now".

It was 1956. By playing the anti-Tamil card the SLFP swept into power, with the help of the LSSP and the CP, 'outbidding the UNP with their promise to make Sinhala the language of the state in twenty-four hours, and outflanking them with their promise to make Buddhism the state religion. Lal was desolate. "We are dead, Rajan," he wrote." Socialism is dead; the only decent thing in our lives is dead. We'll no longer be fighting injustice but each other ... Language and religion: Banda has found the perfect formula for a ready-made majority. God knows what'll happen next."'

Lali and Rajan have a loving marriage. But as the communal incitement increases it bears down upon them with ever greater foreboding. She is the stronger partner and organises amongst the poor, but the incitement is reaching a crescendo ... The story leads to a terrible and dramatic climax - Lali's slaughter at the hands of Sinhalese racists.

The ending of the second book is the fulcrum of the novel as a whole. The Sinhala chauvinists have been whipped up into such a frenzy that normal personal relations between Sinhala and Tamil are no longer possible. What next?

Book Three

"The Boys" in Jaffna

So to the third book. It is 1975. Vijay is a 21 year old student, he is Lali's son. Rajan his father now lives away, heartbroken in England. Vijay has been in the People's Liberation Front (PLF - JVP). Vijay - 'a Tamil, and a Sinhalese, and a bastard' - is far from chauvinist. But the PLF is, believing that all Tamils were a fifth column for 'Indian expansionism'. The nationalised tea plantations are being broken up, and the Tamil workers' families thrown out of the country. Vijay returns early to his university in Peradeniya, in the heart of the plantation country, but the students had already ejected him from the presidency of the union for his Tamil connection, and he cannot get the demoralised lecturers to do anything. Vijay begins to fall in love with Meena, daughter of a Tamil plantation worker, but she cannot marry him. The pain of racism is beyond endurance. Rajan writes to Vijay: '"I cannot bear the people who murdered my wife. I cannot bear the politicians and the priests who solicited it, I cannot bear the intellectuals who connived at it with their silence"'.

Except it was worse. Whether on the radio or in the schools, most intellectuals were by now actively conniving with Sinhala racism. Vijay marries Manel, but she too is taken in by the broad sweep of racist propaganda. Vijay works with a group of teachers fighting for children's right to non-racial education. He discovers that they have been issuing an underground newspaper The Citizen and are trying to set up an organisation. Their organiser reports that the key point of resistance is now coming from the youth, 'The Boys', in Jaffna:

'"They are not fighting out of theory, but of necessity ... They have nothing and they have grown up having nothing, a whole generation of them. And they see even the little they have to make something of their lives with, like education, being taken away from them." Sarath's face was black with anger and contorted with the effort to get his words out. "They go to college to find their language taken away from them, they sit exams to find the pass mark's higher for them, they go for jobs and finally get the message: sorry, no Tamils. That is when they pick up the gun."'

Vijay goes to Jaffna to make contact. He does through Yogi, and with his own great uncle Para who explains what is happening, just as he had before with Lali, "a whole new generation has been pushed back on the land because there's no other outlet for them. Your government has closed down all the options. No jobs, no higher education ... the British took away their past, the Sinhalese took away their future. All they have is the present. And that makes them dangerous".

On to 1983. Vijay and his comrades in the south are doing everything they can to resist the racist tide. On the night of the referendum - the vote to give away the right to vote - he is abducted and taken into police interrogation. In Welikade prison he witnesses the massacre of Tamils. Even then Manel does not believe him. In the end they part.

There is no respite from state sponsored terror for the Tamils, who are heading to Jaffna for refuge. In the meantime Sivanandan portrays the Tigers as hardening, inured to violence and all too ready to use the gun to dispense with political opponents. This message comes from the pen of respected Uncle Para,

'"Everyone looked to him [Yogi] to bring peace between the factions and stop their murderous in-fighting. Without his intervention, my grandson Ravi, Commander Ravi they call him, grows harder. They say he kills on principle. On principle. They have all grown old before their time, our boys, all grown old. They trust only the gun and the cyanide capsule they carry around there necks. Isn't that terrible, that they cannot trust even themselves? What hope for Eelam now?"'

The novel ends in horror. Vijay and Meena travel to Jaffna, and Vijay is killed in cold blood at his cousin Ravi's hand. Cradling Vijay in her arms, Meena looks up at Ravi: '"You have killed the only decent thing left in this land", she said with a terrible dignity, "We'll never be whole again"'.

Assessing Sivanandan's contribution

'The intelligentsia wants to be deceived; the main thing is that the lie should be in cultured packaging.' Ludmila Bulavka, Russian film critic.

With the death of Vijay at hands of the Tigers the integrity of the whole work breaks down. Each of the three books in the novel ends in death. And yet from this last murder no prospect of renewal is offered, pessimism reigns. Vijay has been killed, hope has been killed, memory has been killed. For Sivanandan memory has died in Sri Lanka, and is only preserved through its articulation in exile. But the truth is memory of the oppression has not died, it lives on in the liberation struggle for Tamil Eelam.

Another Sinhala communist friend puts it like this:

'Using the freedom that fiction provides, Sivanandan gives numerous flashes of brilliant insight into Sinhala racism against Tamil people. In fact, despite the fact that Sivanandan himself is a Tamil, it is in the description of Sinhala society that he excels. He describes well the opportunism, treachery and the descent to the lowest form of populist racism of every Sinhala political force through his narrative. He even alludes to some of the economic pressures that strengthen Sinhala racism. However, his description of the development of Tamil resistance to this racism is very flat and empty. He has virtually nothing on the various stages of the Tamil political resistance ending in armed struggle. His political arguments against the Tamil Tigers are just innuendo, although sometimes he descends into repeating crass anti-Tamil propaganda emanating from Sinhala politicians.'

'He is not clear about what he is opposed to in the Liberation struggle. He does not appear to oppose the call for an independent Eelam - he knows well enough that it is Sinhala treachery that has pushed the Tamils to demand independence. Although he does not express it clearly, he seems to veer towards a

strained pacifism. Sivanandan's position is somewhat like a religion in the sense that Marx put it, "It is the sigh of the oppressed, the heart in a heartless world" - in this sense Sivanandan's idealism is akin to religious idealism.'

There comes a point when sophistication is not enough and a breakthrough has to be made, birth has to take place, even if it is painful. The LTTE have found the way forward for the Tamil people - a profound process of revolutionary creation. The transition from armed resistance to peoples war could not have taken place without a simultaneous revolution in social relations. And yet in When Memory Dies there is no indication of the deep social revolution that is taking place in Tamil society, epitomised for instance by the role of women in the struggle.

Where was Race and Class after 1989?

Worse than that, Sivanandan opens the door to the prejudicial attacks on the LTTE so characteristic of western commentators. David Rose, The Observer's reviewer, wrote of the novel that 'it does not back chimerical political winners; instead it charts the descent of the Tigers into mindless gangsterism'!

Sivanandan has to take political responsibility for his work. He does not have to forfeit his apparent but unspecified criticisms of the LTTE to recognise that the movement which is the de facto leadership of the Tamil people should have the right of reply to such filth. Since 1989 Race and Class has not published any factual reporting of the Tamil liberation war, why not start now with the documents of the LTTE?

Perhaps there is more to the analogy between Sivanandan and Tolstoy than might appear. It was Tolstoy who postulated the theory of non-resistance to evil. In 'Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution' written in 1908, on the occasion of Tolstoy's 80th birthday celebrations V.I. Lenin wrote:

'To identify the great artist with the revolution which he has obviously failed to understand, and from which he obviously remains aloof, may at first sight seem strange and artificial. A mirror which does not reflect things correctly could hardly be called a mirror. Our revolution, however, is an extremely complicated thing. Among the mass of those who are directly making and participating in it there are many social elements which have obviously not understood what is taking place and which also stand aloof from the real historical facts with which the course of events has confronted them, And if we have before us a really great artist, he must reflect in his work at least some of the essential aspects of the revolution...'

'The contradictions in Tolstoy's works, views, doctrines, in his school, are indeed glaring... On the one hand, merciless criticism of capitalist exploitation, exposure of government outrages, the farcical courts and the state administration, and unmasking of the profound contradictions between the growth of wealth and achievements of civilisation and the growth of poverty, degradation and misery among the working masses. On the other, the crackpot preaching of submission, "resist not evil" with violence...'

'That Tolstoy, owing to these contradictions, could not possibly understand either the working class movement and its role in the struggle for socialism, or the Russian revolution, goes without saying. But the contradictions in Tolstoy's views and doctrines are not accidental; they express the contradictory conditions of Russian life in the last third of the nineteenth century.'

And so Sivanandan's skills as a writer obscure the weakness of his underlying political position. It is full of critique, it recognises the seeds of revolution but lacks revolutionary guts. The point at which Sivanandan's account is subjectively exhausted is the very point at which revolutionary politics objectively began. He protests against the deepening injustices of the post-colonial state, he is against intolerance, violence and oppression. And yet, in the end, he is unable to distinguish between the violence of the oppressor and that of the oppressed. Furthermore his political soul belongs in an earlier period. He has become distant and aloof from the leadership of the struggle today. In short, Sivanandan is a latter day Tolstoyan.

* * * * *

Can Fiction help where the news media has failed?

The major western powers and the world news media industry practise a near total information blockade on the war in Sri Lanka, at least as that war is experienced by ordinary people. What little is broadcast or written is the product of cynical news management.

There is thus a certain inevitability that the only way the truth, or at least a partial reflection of the true horrors of the genocide, would reach a wider audience, would be through fictional forms. At least in the area of fiction there is no longer a total blockade. And yet this fictional form is still distorting many essential truths of the Tamil liberation war. Heaven forbid that the publishers should assist those voices yet to be heard, those from inside the struggle. The western media still denies this revolutionary voice from the people.

Now that it has been breached, the information blockade has to be opened up. It is up to us to create the means for these new voices of liberation to be heard.

When Memory Dies by A. Sivanandan. £9.99 published by Arcadia Books 1997 ISBN 1-900850-01-X .

Reef by Romesh Gunesekera. £5.99 published by Granta Books 1994 ISBN 0-14-014030-1.

Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai. £6.99 published by Vintage 1995 ISBN 0-09-945921-3.

The Tamils in Sri Lanka: When did they arrive? - II

by
Charles Somasundrum

Nakuleswaram Temple, at Keerimalai in the north, one of the four ancient "Iswarams". Once destroyed by the Portuguese invaders in the 16th century, now bombed by Sinhala forces in 1990.

Continued from previous issue..

I would like to quote Paul E Pieris further in this context. "Long before the arrival of Vijaya, there were in Lanka five recognised isvarams of Siva which claimed and received adoration of all India. These were Tiruketeeswaram near Mahatitha; Munneswaram dominating Salawatta and the pearl fishery; Tondeswaram near Mantota; Tirukoneswaram near the great bay of Kottiyar and Nakuleswaram near Kankesanthurai. Their situation close to these ports cannot be the result of accident or caprice and was probably determined by the concourse of a wealthy mercantile population whose religious wants called for attention." (JRAS(CB) No.70 pp 17-18)

Going back to the Naga capital of Kadiramalai, S Arumugam (*More Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka p.70*) says that the name Kadiramalai was made up of 'Kadiran' (he who holds the lance or Vel) and malai (from where he bestows his grace to his devotees). Centuries after the fall of the Naga kingdom it came to be referred to as Kandiragoda and later Kandergoda becoming Kandercude under the Portuguese and Kantarodai under the Dutch.

Rasanayagam says that recent (he was writing this in 1926) excavations in Kantarodai have led to the discovery of very ancient Indian coins called Puranas in that locality. These coins were in use at a period anterior to 500BC.

Mantai, referred to earlier as the commercial centre of the Naga kings had, an even more ancient history. It was a town of remote antiquity and was the place of origin of five classes of artisans under their chief Visvakarma. These were:-

1. Manu	Kollar (Blacksmiths)
2. Maya	Tachchar (Carpenters)
3. Tuvashta	Kannar (brass-founders)
4. Silpa	Sirpi(Masons; Stone cutters; Sculptors; Architects; Image makers and Painters)
5. Visvanna	(Goldsmiths)

These artisans were referred to as 'Devakannis'. And, according to Rasanayagam, in all probability belonged to the Naga tribe of Oviyar (Ophir of the Bible) who ruled at Mantai in ancient times.

To digress slightly here, according to the Christian Bible, a thousand years before the Christian era in the time of King Solomon ".....the fleet of Hiram which brought gold from Ophir, brought from Ophir a very great amount of almug wood and precious stones." (I Kings Chap.X, v.11). The Bible goes on to say that all king Solomons's drinking vessels were of pure gold "..... for the king had a fleet of ships of Tarshish at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the fleet of ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks." (I Kings ChapX, v.22). According to Rasanayagam, Ophir was the country of the Oviyar referred to earlier and Tarshish its port. This word, he contends, ".... must have been borrowed in the same manner as the Hebrew words for ivory, apes aghil and peacocks - ibha, kapi, ahalim and tukeyim respectively, which are identical with their Tamil names ipam, kapi, aghil and Tokai."

(Ancient Jaffna - ChapIII, pp. 88/89). He goes on to say that in the same manner, the Greek traders carried away rice, ginger and cinnamon known by the Tamils as Arisi, inchiver and karuva. These led to the Tamil contribution to the Greek vocabulary of the words oryza, gingiber and karpion.

"The power and greatness of

these artisan rulers can be gauged when it is known that the earliest Yakka kings of Ceylon found their wives among them. .... Mandodari, the chaste wife of Ravana, the hero of the Ramayana, was the daughter of Maya, who not only presented his son-in-law with an invincible weapon but also built for him the beautiful city of Lankapura" - (Rasanayagam Chap.I pp.15/16).

The existence of ancient ruins at Mantai and the famous Giants Tank near it, are clear signs of an immense population advanced in agriculture. This tank is not mentioned in any of the Sinhala Buddhist chronicles as having been built by any of the kings ruling after Vijaya.

Rasanayagam says *(Ancient Jaffna Chap. III p.83),* **"The proof of this prosperity is the existence of a large number of ruins along the western coast, commencing from Munneswaram in Chilaw, a temple mentioned in the Ramayana as one, at which Rama worshipped during his invasion of Lanka, and extending northward through the districts of Puttalam, Ponparipu (golden plains), Nanattan, Musali, Matota, Vadattaitivu, Pallavaraayankattu, Punakari, Kalmunai and Jaffna. The dilapidated temples at Munneswaram, Udappu, Karativu, Kallar, Matota and Arasapuram clearly prove that the people were Hindus."**

1.	Kanagasuriya	Segarajasekaran	1467 AD
2.	?	Parajasekaran	1478 AD
3.	Sankili	Segarajasekaran	1519 AD
4.	Puvi Raja Pandaram	Pararajasekaran	1561 AD
5.	Kachi Nayinar (usurper)	Parajasekaran	circa 1565 AD
6.	Periya Pulle	Segarajasekaran	circa 1570 AD
7.	Puviraja Pandaram	Parajasingham	circa 1582 AD
8.	Hendarmana Cinga (Edirmana Singha)	Parajasekaran	1591 AD
9.*	The three year old son of Hendarmana Cinga under the Regency of		
	1. Arasakesari (brother of Hendarmana Cinga)		1615 AD
	2. Sankili Kumara (nephew of Hendarmana Cingha) who had Arasakesari assasinated and took over the Regency himself.		1617 AD
	and finally		
10.	Philip de Olivera	Portuguese Governor	1620 AD

In the 8th century AD king Ugra Singan, of the Kalinga dynasty, shifted his capital from Kadiramalai to Singai Nagar on the north-east coast of Nagadipa where the present day town of Vallipuram stands near Point Pedro. His kingdom not only included the northern part of Ceylon but the island of Ramesvaram as well. Singai Nagar rapidly developed social and commercial contacts with the Cholamandalam (a name corrupted, by the English, to Coromandel) coast of southern India. Ptolemy refers to Singai Nagar as Anoubingara.

From the 9th century to the first half of the 11th century not much was known of the kings of Singai Nagar apart from the fact that they were feudatories to the Chola king. From the 12th century onwards up to the conquest of Senpahap Perumal these kings were known as Arya Chakravartis. The list of Arya Chakravartis reads :see table

1. Vijaya Kulankai (Kalingha Magha)	Segarajasekaran	circa 1210AD
2. Kulasekara	Parajasekaran	circa 1246 AD
3. Kulottunga	Segarajasekaran	circa 1256 AD
4. Vikrama	Parajasekaran	circa 1279 AD
5. Varotaya	Segarajasekaran	circa 1302 AD
6. Martanda	Parajasekaran	circa 1325 AD
7. Gunapushana	Segarajasekaran	circa 1348 AD
8. Virotaya	Parajasekaran	circa 1371 AD
9. Jayavira	Segarajasekaran	circa 1394 or 1380 AD
10. Gunavira	Parajasekaran	circa 1417 or 1410 AD
11. Kanagasuriya	Segarajasekaran	circa 1440
12. Senpahap Perumal	Bhuvaneka Bahu	circa 1450

In calling themselves by the alternate names of Parajasekaran and Segarajasekaran the Arya Chakravartis were following the custom then prevalent among the kings of the Chola, Pandya and Sinhala dynasties.

Kanagasuriya was overthrown by Senpahap Perumal (the son of an Indian Panikan by a Sinhala lady) who was the adoptive son of the Sinhala king Parakarama Bahu VI and was known as Sappumal Kumaraya by the Sinhalas. Senpahap Perumal razed the Naga city of Singai Nagar to the ground and built himself a new city in Nullur from where he ruled as Bhuvaneka Bahu. Senpahap Perumal or Bhuvaneka Bahu as he was now known, was a Hindu but showed tolerance towards the Buddhists of whom there were a large number in his new kingdom. It is said to be this Bhuvaneka Bahu who built the Kandaswamy temple in Nallur. S Arumugam in his More Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka, says that the traditional Kaddiyam recited on all festive occasions at this temple, make reference to "Sri Maharajathi Raja ...Srimat

Sangabodhi Bhuvaneka Bahu..." even today.

On the death of his adoptive father, Senpahap Perumal went south to claim his throne for himself and Kanagasuriya returned to reclaim his Nallur throne. The kings reigning from Nallur thereafter were :-

It must be remembered that there had always been a constant two way movement of population between southern India and both the Sinhala and Tamil ruled areas of Sri Lanka. The movement towards Sri Lanka however, intensified in the 12th to 14th centuries AD. This was the time when the Chola and Pandya kingdoms suffered disintegration and were hard pressed by the Hoysala Vijayanagar kings. This was also the time when Malik Kafur invaded and ravaged the southern Indian kingdoms which in turn led to a mass migratory movement from southern India to the comparative safety of the Tamil and Sinhala kingdoms of Sri Lanka.

Professor Stanley Thambiah's recent book - 'Buddhism Betrayed ?' has an interesting footnote at p.153, where he refers to Yasmin Gooneratne's 'Relative Merits: A Personal Memoir of the Bandaranayake Family of Sri Lanka' . This reads -

"... according to certain sources the apical ancestor of "the Bandaranayake family tree" was an Indian officer of high standing who, serving under the kings of Kandy and bearing the name Neela Perumal, was made high priest of the Temple of the God Saman and commanded to take the name of Nayaka Pandaram (Chief Record Keeper)."

"If there is nothing to hide, why ban the world's media ?"

The Campaign Against State Terrorism (CASTIS), based in Manchester, has sent the following appeal to 241 Members of the British Parliament:

INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS WEEK

. "The Sri Lankan army has mounted a violent offensive against own Tamil citizens in the north-east of the island. This started on 12th May and is continuing. British citizens, particularly those of Sri Lankan origin, are appalled and anguished at this offensive which is called "Jaya Sikurui". This means "Sure of Victory", indicating a triumphalist, oppressive approach, designed to crush the Tamil people through war, and to further deprive them of food and shelter. However, the Sri Lankan government states that the purpose of this offensive is to secure a main supply route from Vavuniya to Jaffna, though the very name of the operation itself would rather contradict this.

"The fact sheet accompanying this letter shows that only a fraction of the required food, fuel and medicines are being allowed through to the Tamil areas, resulting in starvation and death of the population.

"Most of the people of Jaffna have fled the peninsula as they have no faith in the abilities of the occupying Sri Lankan army to provide their basic needs and treat them with fairness.

"All media, whether local or foreign,are banned from these areas by the Sri Lankan government, resulting in the world knowing little of the situation there. If the Sri Lankan government had nothing to hide, surely it would not need to ban the world's media .....

"Given the situation, we should be most grateful if you could take up these matters with Mr.Derek Fatchet M.P., Minister in charge of the South Asia Desk of the Foreign Ministry, with a view to achieving the following :

1. The immediate cessation of the offensive.

2. Ensure the supply of the required food, fuel and medicines, inclusive of N.G.0 and Foreign Government Aid, to the Tamil areas.

3. Allow local and foreign media to cover the war.

4. Withdraw the armed forces from the Jaffna peninsula and other occupied areas of the Northern and Eastern provinces.

5. Stop the bombardment of the Tamil areas by the Sri Lankan forces by land, sea and air.

6. Facilitate negotiation between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Sri Lankan Government, with the United Kingdom Government offering itself as a third party mediator. "

With Compliments

Raja & Co.

Solicitors

Administrators of Oaths

295 Balham High
Road
Tooting Bec
London
SW17 7BA

Tel: 0181 - 682 2585
Fax: 0181 - 682 2575

Dwaraka

The shop that has
EVERYTHING
that you need

199 , The Broadway
Southall
Middx
London
UB1 7LZ

Tel: 0181-813 9126

MOTOR INSURANCE

FREE COURTESY CAR FOR ALL COMPREHENSIVE POLICYHOLDERS UK RAC COVER AVAILABLE FOR £29
& FREE EUROPEAN COVER AVAILABLE

SPECIALIST SCHEMES FOR
PROVISIONAL/ INTERNATIONAL LICENCE HOLDERS, SHORT PERIOD RESIDENCY.
MULTIPLE ACCIDENT/CONVICTIONS, HIGH PERFORMANCE, YOUNG DRIVERS

COMMERCIAL
Shops, Restaurants Offices Hotels Night Clubs Manufacturing distribution Warehouses Buildings Commercial Vehicle Liability Motor Fleet and Trade

TEENAGE CHILDREN DRIVING FOR THE FIRST TIME ?
CALL ME NOW FOR BEST ADVICE

C.C. RAVEENDRA
REGISTERED INSURANCE BROKER

0181 904 9686
0956 345 004 AFTER OFFICE HOURS

FINANCE
* Mortgages
* Commercial Loans
* Non Status Finance
* including, No Proof of Income
* Arrears & CCJ'S

BEDDINGTON INSURANCE SERVICES (WEMBLEY) LTD. 96 SUDBURY AVENUE WEMBLEY, MIDDX, HA0 3BG

JAYEWARDENE'S YEARS OF POWER

A Contemporary Assessment (1987)

S.Sivanayagam

The fact that a 7-year political dormancy separated Junius Richard Jayewardene's years of power and his death at the age of 90 may have had something to do with the charitable references, and the flattering obituaries and cosmetic acclaim that he earned at his death.

Public memory being what it is, short, and often selective, HOT SPRING brings to its readers the sixth part of a contemporary assessment and narrative of Jayewardene's years of power, written and published in 1987.

IN a 40-page booklet, titled 10 YEARS OF JAYEWARDENE RULE, the author S. Sivanayagam covered the years 1977 - 1987, and records a chunk of history that was both dark and depressing, and illustrative of the ignoble style of Jayewardene's governance.

Part VI

(Continued from previous issues)

SRI LANKA
10
Years of Jayewardene Rule

As it happened during Jayewardene's 10-year rule, with every passing year getting more dreadful than the previous one, 1985 proved no different. A quick run-through of major incidents of that year may reveal a pattern.

January: Coastal village of Mathagal in Jaffna shelled by cannon fire from the sea. Reports of starvation. Two boat loads of Tamil refugees arrive at the Indian coast of Nagapattinam. Shocking army atrocities in Vankalai in Tamil district of Mannar. Under curfew, soon after midnight, a young Catholic parish priest, Fr. Mary Bastian is shot to death in the presbytery along with two others, and his body taken away. (Minister Lalith Athulathmudali claims that Fr. Bastian had escaped to India with Tamil separatists!) Tamil militants blow up Colombo-bound Yal Devi train carrying army personnel at Murikandy. A government spokesman says in Colombo that 22 soldiers were killed and 25 others seriously injured, but the death toll could be more. UNI reports that Government had imposed a blanket ban on Indian journalists. Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xue Qian arrives in Colombo.

February: Ten gun boats costing £ 1.3 million each to be acquired from Britain. Refugee influx into India, from Mannar villages. Colombo-bound Zaire Airways cargo plane with arms and ammunition bearing Portuguese markings makes distress landing at Trivandrum, but is allowed to proceed after refuelling on the personal intervention of Lalith Athulathmudali, Tamil militants blast approach road to Gurunagar army camp within Jaffna city, making movements of armed forces difficult. 32 Tamil men shot dead in cold blood, some in front of their wives and children, in the Mannar area, according to London Times report. **Three British media people including Nichoas Coleridge arrested and jailed in Welikade prison 'For a hilarious account of his experience, read Sri Lankan imprisonment /How I spied for Russia in Sri Lanka, Spectator, London, 23 Feb. 1985).** Liberation Tigers attack Kokkilai army camp, in Mullaitivu. Jane's Weekly, reports that Sri Lanka has purchased from Israel two twin-engined double aluminium hull "Dubar" coastal patrol craft, equipped to carry missiles. J.N. Dixit posted to Colombo.

March: Militants attack Kilinochchi police station. Refugee influx continues at Rameswaram. Liberation Tigers attack Madawachchiya police station in Sinhalese district. Air Force helicopter damaged by militant fire, off Nagerkovil in north coast. Colombo rejects G. Parthasarathy as mediator. Indian Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari arrives in Colombo. New Delhi circles take note of concern in Tamilnadu over a possible shift in India's policy on the Sri Lankan Tamil question. President

M.K. SRI & Co

SOLICITORS
ADMINISTRATORS OF OATHS

5 Eastcote Lane
South Harrow
Middx
HA0 8BW

Tel: 0181- 423 2141
Fax: 0181- 933 1361

Vasan & Company

Auditors & Accountants

Specialists in

- * Accounts Preparation
- * Book Keeping Services
- * VAT, PAYE, Self Assessment
- * Tax Planing
- * Tax Investigation

78 Beckenham Road
Beckenham
Kent
BR3 4RH

Tel: 0181- 658 8867 Fax: 0181- 658 8177

Expert Tutors

Agency

Highly qualified, experienced teachers available for private tuition to teach primary and secondary pupils in all subjects acording to the National Curriculum. They teach in your own home at the time convenient to you
All areas covered.

9am to 9pm All seven days

Phone 0181- 578 3943

(Interested Teachers are welcome to join the Agency

Jayewardene visits Pakistan.

April: Madras Customs seize large quantity of arms and ammunition at the harbour. A West Berlin reports says 1800 Tamils had sought asylum in the first 3 months of this year. All four active Liberation groups - LTTE, EROS, TELO and EPRLF agree to function as a united front. Liberation Tigers storm Jaffna police station. **Mrs. Thatcher in Colombo. At a banquet in her honour President Jayewardene makes implicit request for stationing of British troops in Sri Lanka. Indian government expresses astonishment.** Violence between Muslims and Tamils in Eastern province. Athulathmudali describes as "rubbish" Minister Devanayagam's charge that STF commandos had instigated the violence. Movements of busloads of thugs to the East, from Colombo reported. Stateowned bank at Nikaweratiya, a Sinhalese area, robbed of Rs. 60 lakhs. Sinhalese observer Dr. Frank Jayasinghe reports to President that police commandos were involved in Muslim violence against Tamils. 6500 out of total population of 8300 in Tamil village of Karaitivu become refugees.

May: Karainagar naval base, Gurunagar army camp and Jaffna Fort camp, all come under militant attack. TELO attack on army camp at Kokkavil near Murikandy. **PTI correspondent in Colombo Krishan Anand arrested and detained in Welikade prison. Army rampage on north coast; an orgy of killing, looting and raping. Over 50 Tamils locked up inside Valvettiturai community centre building and blasted alive with bombs, Nearly 200 Tamil civilians believed killed.** Five days later, over 150 Sinhalese civilians massacred at Anuradhapura, sending shock waves in Sinhalese areas. On the following day, Sinhalese navy men attack Tamil passengers, including women and children with axes and clubs on the boat named "Kumudhini", off Nedunthivu, a Jaffna islet. 48 killed. 'Mannar police station attacked. In Jaffna, Gurunagar army camp closes down! Government to purchase 9 British-built "Cougar" naval boats, and two British-built 46-seater Avros to transport troops. China to supply more patrol boats and T-56 assault rifles. Pakistan to furnish AK-47 and M-16 rifles.

This, by end- May, was the lead-up to what might be termed as the beginning of the Bhandari-Thimpu chapter. But wasn't there more than one significant pointer during this 5- month period which explains why President Jayewardene had to pocket his pride and look up to Delhi for succour? There were several in fact. Government was meeting reverses on two fronts - the military and the "demographic". On the military front, police stations in the north were getting dismantled, the Gurunagar army camp in Jaffna city was given up, and the Government was losing territory in both Jaffna and in the tourist belt north of Trincomalee. The successful frontal attack on the Kokkilai army camp by the Liberation Tigers showed that guerrilla warfare was entering a new phase - offensives against fortified positions. The North was gradually getting cut off, physically, from the rest of the country. Rail links between Colombo and Jaffna was getting snapped, and so they remain till this day. Army mobility in Jaffna was getting curbed. Not a pretty picture from the Government point of view.

On the demographic front, the situation was even worse. State sponsored Sinhala colonisation in Tamil-dominated North- East had been a sore issue with the Tamils for well over a quarter century.

Successive Sinhalese governments had apparently envisaged a demand for a separate homeland long before the Tamils did. The colonisation process served two purposes, one, to change the demographic composition in the North- East and reduce Tamil representation in Parliament; two, to delink the contiguity of Tamil majority area between North and East. President Jayewardene thought of a third purpose - export the difficult lumpen elements in Sinhala society to where Tamils lived in a majority. It was demographic aggression with an extra dimension. A classic instance was Dollar Farm and Kent Farm in the north. Plantation Tamils who had fled mob fury during 1977 and 1981 had been settled in these areas on the initiative of Tamil humanitarian organisations like the Gandhiyam and the Tamil Refugee Rehabilitation Organisation, with the help of Western aid-giving bodies. On the plea that these had become "terrorist- infested" areas, Government troops launched search-and destroy missions, and literally chased these helpless plantation Tamils from the areas, making them refugees on the run again. In their place were settled convicts with their

HEER RANJHA

Fully Licenced

Restaurant

Sri Lankan and Indian Cuisine

Catering (free home delivery)
Parties (75 seats)
Takeaway

Opening hours: 12:00 - 15:00
(All days) : 18:00 - 24:00

Tel: 0181- 767 7556
0181- 767 1005

117, Mitcham Road, Tooting,
London, SW17 9PE(close to Smith Bros.)

Markandan & Co.

Solicitors

Empowered to Administer Oaths

M. Markandan LL.B.

- * Immigration Homeoffice
- * Refugee- Asylum
- * Commercial Conveyancing
- * Matrimonial
- * Licensing
- * House / Flat purchase and sale
- * Representation at Police Station etc.

Legal Aid
We are always friendly
Easy to talk and keen to help

Thamil House, 720 Romford Road,
Manor Park, London, E12 6BT

Tel: 0181- 514 8188 Fax: 0181- 514 8303

Alaga

& Co.

Solicitors

Administraters of Oaths

Alagarajah & Sasha

190 Tooting High Street
London
SW17 0SF

Tel: 0181 - 767 3345
Fax / Tel: 0181 - 767 9892

N & P

FINANCIAL SERVICES

WE ARRANGE COMMERCIAL LOANS & RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGES (SATISFIED CCJ'S & DEFAULTS ACCEPTED)

AN INTRO: TO AN INDEP: FINANCIAL ADVISOR

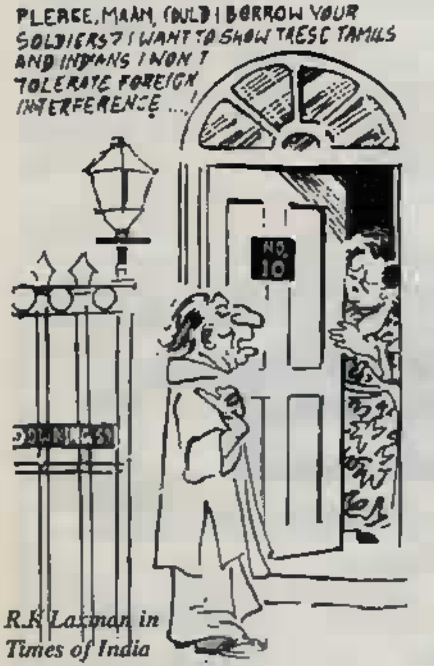
Tel: 0181 - 527 1104

73 FOREST ROAD,
WALTHAMSTOW,
LONDON, E17 6HF

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING / SURVEYING & BUILDING SERVICES.
RISING DAMP / TIMBER TREATMENT WORKS FOR MORTGAGE PURPOSE

Tel: 0181- 503 2115, 0181- 923 7799 Fax: 0181 - 503 2085

families, an interesting experiment the Government claimed, of a liberal open prison system ! It was also another way of relieving the congestion in Sri Lankan jails which were getting flooded with Tamil "terrorist suspects" ! Army camps were also set up, in order to give protection to the "open prison" inmates and their families. On December 1, 1984, Tamil militants launched a surprise attack on these Sinhalese "civilians", resulting in the death of at least 42 convict settlers and the fleeing from the area of several hundred others. The militants followed it up with an attack on two Sinhalese fishing settlements in Nayaru and Kokkilai. Members of these new settlements were migrant seasonal fishermen who had got on well with Tamil fishermen of the area for generations and had gone back to their homes in the south-west once the fishing season was over. They had now been settled permanently in these areas with Government aid, along with their families, and had become in course of time fishermen as well as army informers. Sinhala casualties as given by Government spokesman Dr. Wickrama Weerassoria on the morning of 2 December were 27 killed at Nayaru and 30 at Kokkilai. In the afternoon, the State-owned radio said 29 were killed at Nayaru and 30 at Kokkilai. But by the night the government had "drastically reduced the figures of those killed to only 1 1 ". The Times, London headlined the news by saying: SRI LANKA RIDDLE: CONFUSION ON DEATH TOLL. On 3 December Minister Athulathmudali admitted in Colombo that guns had been given to Sinhalese fishermen at these two places.


PLEASE, MA'AM, COULD I BORROW YOUR SOLDIERS? I WANT TO SHOW THESE TAMILS AND INDIANS I WON'T TOLERATE FOREIGN INTERFERENCE ...!
NO. 10
DOWNING ST

R.K. Laxman in Times of India

Thatcher: Request for British troops

There was little doubt that this had stung the government badly. On January 8, 1985, the government removed its mask. It was announced that plans are finalised to settle 30,000 Sinhalese families in the North this year, with the ultimate aim of creating "parity" in the population of the two communities. Settlements would be created in Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Mannar districts and extended to Jaffna peninsula next year. The new settlers would be given military training and provided arms. On January 18, the National Security Minister reiterated Government intention to settle the 30,000 Sinhalese families in the North "with total protection". On February 20, President Jayewardene, speaking on the Address to Parliament, made the ponderous statement: "The borders of Sri Lanka are Point Pedro and Devinuwara in the North and South; Batticaloa and Colombo in the East and West. The terrorists are attempting to shoot their way into the heart of Sri Lanka to the borders of what they call the State of Eelam. If we do not occupy the Border, the Border will come to us. We intend to act before they succeed". Alas, the "terrorists" acted first. On 13 March the Liberation Tigers launched at 3 a.m. an attack on the Madawachiya police station and railway station. On 14 May occurred the awesome but daring massacre of Sinhalese civilians at Anuradhapura and the even more daring escape through territory dotted with army camps and police stations; the first act of undeniable terrorism, in an area which was certainly beyond "the Eelam Border" President Jayewardene had in mind. The message was unspoken, but it was clear : "Mr. President, before you settle 30,000 Sinhalese families in our homeland, how capable are you in defending your own heartland?".

J.N. Dixit posted to Colombo

Within a week of the Anuradhapura massacre, while the armed forces were engaged in reprisal slaughters of Tamils, at Nedunthivu in the North and Kalmunai in the East, President Jayewardene set in motion a series of diplomatic moves. His Foreign Affairs adviser, exPress baron Esmond Wicremasinghe was rushed to Delhi to meet the Indian Premier, on 16th May.. On the 28th, Indian Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari flew to Colombo. On 1 June Mr. Jayewardene himself arrived in Delhi. Did Indian policy on Sri Lanka, and on the Tamils, diverge sharply at this point of time? If so, how and why? That story might best be left to future researchers. But the fact was, there was a rush of events from the second half of 1985 and into 1986, some of which seemed to be surreal, and packed into a drama that had elements of the Theatre of the Absurd. Whoever did the scripting, the play was certainly picking up; a lot of toing and froing; diplomatic hustle and bustle. Quick-Fixing. Camaraderie was in the air between Colombo and Delhi.

to be continued

G.Yuhendran

Gnanasubramaniam Yuhendran, former General Manager CEYNOR Development Foundation and his elder daughter Tharsh itha of Kokuvil, Jaffna,died under tragic circumstances, 1 June in Canada. They are Husband and daughter of Kamalamanohari, former Senior Asst.Bursar, University of Jaffna. Cremation took place in Toronto 5 June.

49, Rhonda Road, Apt.82, Guelph,Ontario MIH 7A4. Tel: (519) 767 1817.

* * * * *

K.E.Shiradhananda

K.E.Shiradhananda (Shira), one-time Chief Reporter on the editorial staff of the CEYLON DAILY NEWS, and later proprietor of Ananda Press, 82/5, Wolfendhal Street, Colombo 3, passed away in Colombo.

* * * * *

R. Rajanathan

Rajanathan, former Director, Sri Lanka Hospitals (Pvt.) Ltd., son of late Mr. & Mrs. Ramanathan, died in Mumbai India on June 18. Funeral Colombo, 22nd June.

No. 83/3A, W.A Silva Mawatha, Colombo 6.

* * * * *

Dr. Badiuddhin Mahmud

Al Haj Dr.Badiuddhin Mahmud, who as Education minister in the Srimavo Bandaranaike government of 1970-77 authored the policy of standardisation, which discriminated against Tamil students seeking higher learning, died on June 16 at his Kollupitiya residence. He was 93.

* * * * *

C.T.K. Thiagarajah

Formerly of Nallur, father of Sooriyakumaran(UK) Nagarajan and Kailasanathan(Canada). Cremated in Canada on 29 May

* * * * *

R.Pulendran

Ramalingam Pulendran, native of Kokuvil, retired accountant (Postal Dept.) and husband of late Poomani. father of Indrani(India), Nandadevi (Canada), Yogamani(Australia), Balasingham(Canada), Tissaweerasingham (Canada) , Sarojini and Pavalamani, father -in - law of Thirunavukarasu (Arasan Printers), Sripathythasan, Suseeladevi, Yoheswaran and Yoganathan, died on 5 June in Colombo Cremated 6 June.

16/1 , 57th Lane, (off Rudra Mawatha), Wellawatte.

* * * * *

Rajah Asirwatham

Rajah Asirwatham , earlier Deputy Commissioner, Ministry of Planning, Colombo and on retirement a Director at Marga Institute, passed away on May 29th in the United States. He was 78.

Mr. Asirwatham leaves his wife Selvarani nee Thambiayah, daughter Dushyanti (Sri Lanka) Geetha Sathianathan(USA), sons Wijayan (USA), Pathman (USA) and Dr. Indran Asirwatham (Sri Lanka) and two brothers A. Selvanayagam and Gnani Asirwatham (Australia). Funeral took place on May, 31.

Apt. 706, South Tower, 55, Willow Street, Meriden, Conn. 06450, USA.

* * * * *

Mrs.Lily Navamani Mills

The death occurred on 30 May in Sydney, Australia, of Navamani Mills nee Luther, wife of late Rev.K.J.Mills and mother of Jeanne Balaratnarajah, Easterine Clarke, Culam Mills, Prem Mills an Christian Mills.

She was a sister of the late Dr.W.L.Jeyasingham, President of Jaffna College and Professor of Geography, University of Jaffna and of the late Dr.Gunaratnam Luther who died under tragic circumstances during the occupation of Jaffna by the Indian "Peace Keeping Force".

Navamani was the eldest of eight children of the late Mr.and Mrs. R.C.Luther of Erlalai. She taught in many schools in Sri Lanka and had travelled widely in Europe and USA. Her burial took place on 3 June in Woodbine, NSW.

161, North Sydne Road Woodbine, 2560NSW,Australia.

15, Evelina Road, Nunhead SE15 2DX, UK. Tel:(0171-7329343).

* * * * *

Mrs. A. Chellammah

Wife of late N.Arunasalam, mother of A.Thavarajah and A.Kugarajah (Germany) on 9th June in Jaffna.

23/2, College Road, Neeraviady, Jaffna.

* * * * *

Low Cost international calls

Save more than 70% on your phone bills!

Australia	24p
Canada	15p
France	19p
Germany	18p
India	50p
Malaysia	42p
Sri Lanka	**58p**
Singapore	30p
USA	10p

No
Minimum monthly use
Access charge
Vat
Setup fee

Call from
your
Home
Office
Mobile
Payphone

Agents Welcome

Call Suren on 0181- 723 5266 or 0956 377 635

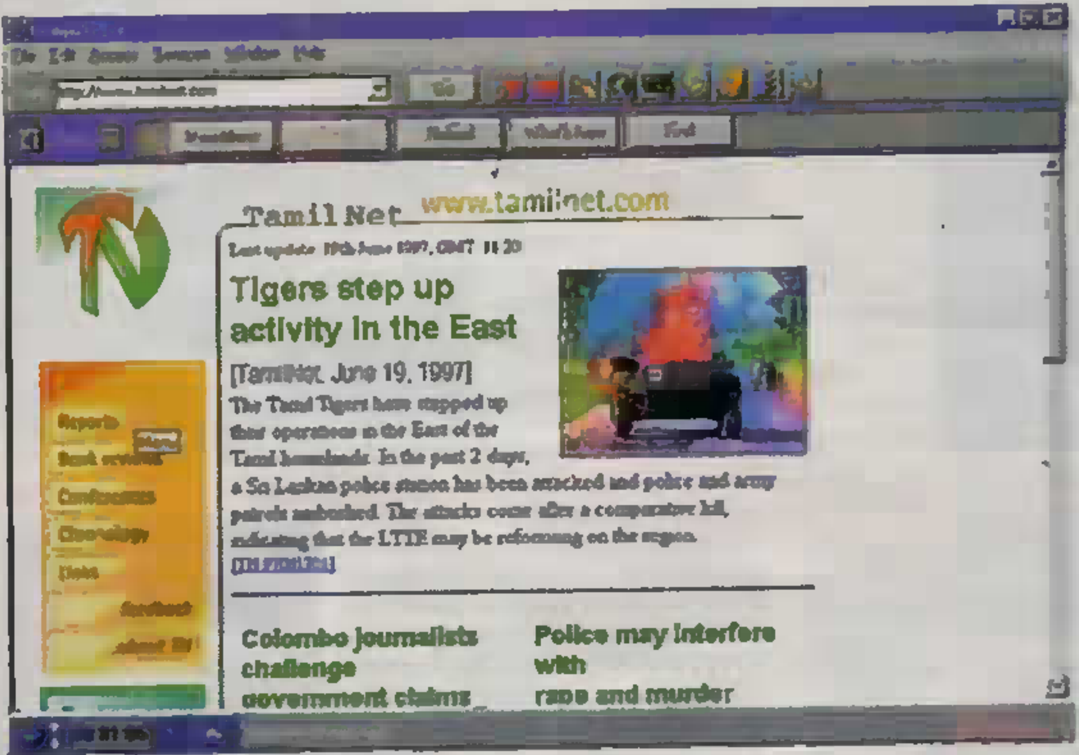
"Tamil Net"

launches a web site

The Internet based news organisation, TamilNet, has launched a web site.

The site carried news articles filed by TamilNet journalists covering different aspects of the conflict on the island of Sri Lanka, and is updated daily.

TamilNet would be familiar to most users of the Internet with an interest in the Sri Lanka conflict. An electronic mail service operated by the organisation has been distributing press releases, urgent action appeals and other pieces of information from various sources for over two years.



Tamil Net www.tamilnet.com

Tigers step up activity in the East

[TamilNet, June 19, 1997]

The Tamil Tigers have stepped up their operations in the East of the Tamil homelands. In the past 2 days, a Sri Lankan police station has been attacked and police and army patrols ambushed. The attacks come after a comparative lull, indicating that the LTTE may be reforming in the region.

Colombo journalists challenge government claims

Police may interfere with rape and murder

The web site is a change in approach, as well as format, from the email based operation. Several journalists file TamilNet's own stories, providing news and analysis of events on the island. Although announced last year, the site has only been launched recently, as considerable effort has had to be put into building up an infrastructure with several correspondents (including one in Colombo), contributors from within the Tamil areas and independent analysts.

TamilNet say they are dedicated to challenging the Sri Lankan government's censorship of news from the Tamil homelands. The distribution list was set up for interested parties to obtain information that is not publicised by the Colombo based news agencies.

The LTTE press release has been regularly distributed by TamilNet, as have appeals by Amnesty International, the International Federation of Tamils and TCHR amongst others. The distribution list includes officials from several governments as well as many individuals from around the world, according to TamilNet, but the organisation refused to give details. The list is confidential.

Carrying the LTTE press release has led the Sinhalese government to claim that TamilNet is the LTTE's electronic service, though this is denied by both the LTTE and TamilNet. The site also has a chronology of the conflict, which gives a brief historic prelude before detailing some of the significant events in the recent history of the Tamil people, allowing those with a limited knowledge to quickly gain an overview. TamilNet say that they will be extending this to give more detail, yet be easy to explore.

A section to publish the papers of international conferences on the Tamil issue is expected to be updated with details of some of the more recent ones. A book review section has been introduced to highlight publications on the Sri Lankan conflict.

TamilNet welcomes feedback and an electronic form has been provided, along with one to sign up to the (free) email service. The TamilNet site can be viewed at **http://www.tamilnet.com.**

- Merza

From making runs to making cement?

Behind every successful man stands a woman. So goes a saying. But for India's ex-cricket captain Mohamed Azharuddin everything has been going wrong ever since he wed his second wife, the Bombay film starlet, Sangeeta Bijlani. First he lost the captaincy. Now he has lost his place in the team itself. What has happened to this cavalier batsman and brilliant fielder ? Recurrent Door form inbatting is attributed to be the reason for the axe, but could it be also non-cricketing reasons that led to his exit ?Indian cricket has apparently become so -commercialised that like Indian politics, money power seems to be the one that matters.

Azharuddin who hails from Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, where his first wife and children live, is now reported to be contemplating settling down in Bangalore, and go into business. He is negotiating to take over a cement factory in Karnataka. says the report.

Netanyahu's wife has her problems

A report from Jerusalem dated June 1 says: The wife of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hates the presence of women in her husband's entourage according to a new book about the right-wing Prime Minister.

NETANYAHU - THE ROAD TO POWER reveals that Ms.Sara Netanyahu recently demanded in vain that a secretary in the Prime Minister' office be sacked because she was too pretty, according to extracts published in the MAARIV newspaper.

The book, by journalists Ben Kaspit and Ilan Kfir, also recounts an angry telephone conversation a year ago between Ms.Sara Netanyahu and Communications minister Limor Livnat whom she suspected of having an affair with her husband the Israeli Prime Minister. The exchange degenerated into cursing after Ms.Sara Netanyahu refused to allow Ms.Limot Livnat to speak to her husband.Thereafter, the communications minister Ms Livnat responded : "You're really crazy. Now I believe everything I've heard about you" .

Mr. Netanyahu whose aides had tried to conceal Ms Livnat's appointment from the Prime Minister's wife , later phoned the minister to apologise, the book said.

It is not the first time Ms.Sara Netanyahu's behaviour has hit the headlines. The First Lady was embroiled in a scandal over the sacking of a nanny shortly after Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu took office in June last year.

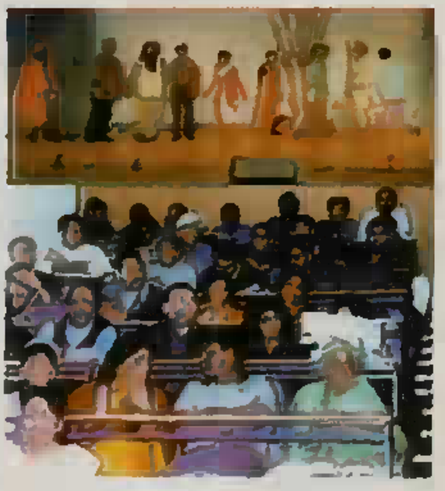
Brunel UniversityTamil Society

Brunel University Tamil Society (Middlesex, U.K.) held a very pleasing cultural programme at the University hall recently. Entitled "Muthamil Vizha", consisting of "Iyal" (Literature), "Isai"(Music) and "Nadaham"(Drama), in the traditional Tamil mode it proved an enriching experience to the audience present, both young and old.

While "Iyal" was presented in the form of a magazine comprising various contributions from Tamil scholars under the direction of editor Jeyanantharasa, the "Isai" programme consisted of a Veena recital by students of Mrs.Vasuki Sivathasan, and Bharata Natya performances by Gowri Kalyani Sivagurunathapillai and Gurubaleny Gopal and Dhakshayi Dhanapathy of the Sri Meenatchi Bharata Natya Palli, East Ham. This was followed by a "Villupattu" presented by South Bank University students.

The third component "Nadaham" which was in the hands of veteran producer K.Balendra consisted of a drama entitled "Eppo Varuvar" and "Kavitha Nihalvu", a dramatized poetry recital very evocative of the agony being endured by our people in our homeland 5000 miles away. Other items in the evening's programme included a Dance medley of East and West and a light music offering from Geethavanee" music group led by Ajanthan.

Brunel University Tamil Society (BUTS) president S.Sivathasan and the members deserve a big hand for their sense of dedication in promoting Tamil culture and keeping alive Tamil consciousness through cultural evenings like this.



from Arun Gananathan

Vigil outside No.10. Downing St.

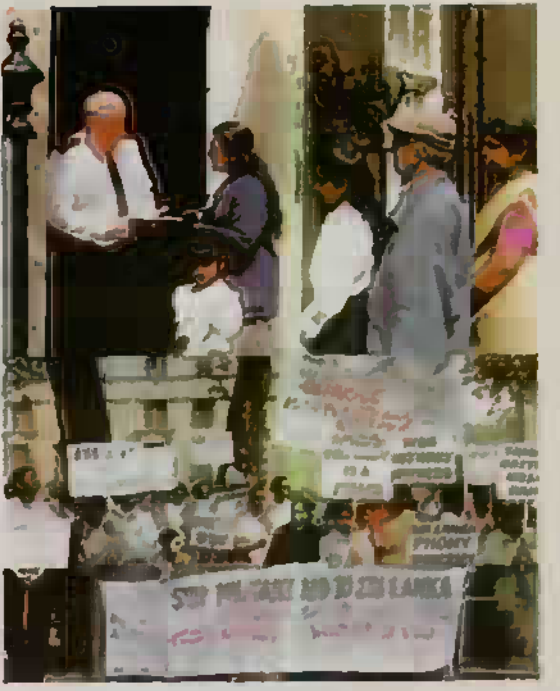
Hundreds of Tamils and members of Tamil Centre for Human Rights (TCHR) stood in front of the British Prime Minister's residence at Downing Street on 17 May, seeking condemnation of Sri Lanka's war on the Tamil people

TONY
HAVE
A HEART
GENOCIDE

TAMILS
GETTING
KILLED
DAILY
TONY
HAVE
A HEART
HELP
STOP
KILLINGS
GENOCIDE
IN
LANKA

The vigil was joined by several women and children who patiently stood for hours on the busy Whitehall Street.

In an appeal submitted to the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the TCHR said:"... With a community of some 80,000 members in this country, British Tamils are deeply anxious and concerned for their relatives facing the brunt of Sri Lanka's heartless war on Tamils. We have listened enthusiastically to countless assurances from Labour politicians that the human rights situation in Sri Lanka would be monitored very closely.


STOP MILITARY AID TO SRI LANKA

"We take this opportunity to alert you to the fact that the human rights situation has deteriorated to an all-time low, with the Chandrika administration having earned the worst record in the island's history of persecuting the Tamil nation.....

The appeal was signed by Eliza Mann on behalf of TCHR.

Working for Human Rights of Tamils

The Tamil Centre for Human Rights (TCHR) has been functioning in France from 1990, under the name Le Centre Tamoul Pour Les Droits De L'Homme.Since then, it has been handling various tasks concerning Human Rights violations in Sri Lanka, as well as projecting the plight of Tamil refugees scattered in several parts of the world. The organisation was formally registered in France in 1992.

The TCHR began publishing a monthly bulletin in French "Les Droits Tamouls", which continues to this day. From this year the publication appears in English as well.

The TCHR representative Mr.S.V.Kirupaharan attended a Seminar on "Human Rights and Refugees" at Oxford University in 1992 as well as the World Human Rights Conference in Austria in 1993. He also represented TCHR at a Seminar organised by the Kurdistan Human Rights Project in Brussels.

In 1992. the TCHR sent affidavits concerning 512 persons to the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which were subsequently transmitted to the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.The TCHR has now made a fresh appeal through the Paris-based Tamil weekly, the EELAMURASU asking Tamils who have faced arbitrary arrests, detention or torture, or who have direct knowledge of any such violation of human rights to submit affidavits. The TCHR has undertaken to take up legal issues connected with such violations. The TCHR also invites representations from persons who fear deportation consequent to rejection of their asylum applications.

The address to which such affidavits should be sent is as follows Le Centre Tamoul Pour Les Droits De L'Homme, 9, Rue des Peupliers, 95140 Garges les Gonesse. FRANCE. Tel: 33-660 493 651.

WORLD CONFERENCE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS
CONFÉRENCE MONDIALE
SUR LES DROITS DE L'HOMME

Caption:Mr.Kirupaharan pictured at the Vienna Conference on Human Rights.

London Tamil Christian Congregation celebrate their 25th year

Sri Lankan Tamil Christians, friends and well-wishers gathered at River court Methodist Church, at Hammersmith in London, on Sunday 25th May, to mark the 25th year of the London Tamil Christian Congregation.

Rev Sam Jeyathilagarajah writes to say"....The first address , "Our Beginning" was delivered by C.J.T.Thamotheram, an eminent and distinguished member of the congregation.He referred to the visit of the late Rev.Selvaratnam, popularly and affectionately known as "Periya Annan" to London in the early 1960s. It was then that Rev.Selvaratnam had spoken about the need for Tamil Christians to worship God in their own language. It was 12 years before this vision began to bear fruit, when the late Rev.Selvaratnam started regular worship in the Tamil language. ...Mr.Thamotheram concluded his address with an air of concern regarding the commitment of the Tamils in passing our language and culture to the next generation.

While Mrs.Rathika Rajan , the Junior Church Co-ordinator of the congregation spoke on "The Present", the third address on "The Future" was given by Rev.Ivor Cameron Smith who was born in India and had served in Britain from his youthful days, and who now holds the prestigious position in the Royal Household as chaplain to Her Majesty the Queen.

Dance extravaganza in aid of Tamil Rehabilitation

Five dance teachers in U.K. presented 86 of their students in a dance extravaganza in aid of the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (T.R.O.) on Saturday 14 June. The programme was held in the Brent Town Hall, Wembley.

A crowded hall was treated to a medley of dance items, a mix of folk, traditional and Bharata Natyam and dance drama.

The entire proceeds of the evening will go to meet the educational needs of Tamil children in Tamil Eelam.

Vocal Arangetram

The Carnatic vocal arangetram of Sharmini, daughter of Mr & Mrs. Thiruchelvam of Toynbee Road, Wimbledon, U.K. was held on Sunday 8 June at the Civic Suite, Wandsworth Town Hall.

Sharmini is the disciple of Smt.Sivasakthi Sivanesan, Resident Teacher at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

WESTERN JEWELLERS

The One & Only Thamil Jeweller in London

- VISIT US NOW FOR LATEST 22CT. GOLD JEWELLERIES.
- WIDE RANGE OF STOCKS ALWAYS AVAILABE

Thali Kodi, Necklace sets, Pathakkams, Various types of Ear Studs, Jimmikkies, Panchayutham, Chains, Bangles Etc. Etc...

We Perform Thali Pooja as Well..

We are at your service seven days a Week

230 UPPER TOOTING ROAD, TOOTING, LONDON SW17 7EW / TEL: 0181-767 3445 FAX: 0181-767 3753

AYNGARAN

ENTERPRISE / VIDEO

(Wholesale & Retail)

We stock more than 2000 original video cassettes

AINGHARAN VIDEO
ORIGINAL HOME VIDEO

- * Sea Food
- * Fresh Vegetables
- * Fresh Meat
- * Tamil News papers
- * Tamil Magazines
- * Audio Cassettes
- * Video Cassettes
- * CDs, Video CDs

80, Burlington Road, (opposite DSS office)
New Malden, Surrey KT3 4NY
Tel: 0181-942 1561 / Fax: 0181-296 8778

AINGHARAN VIDEO
ORIGINAL HOME VIDEO

Refugee sister rocking refugee baby to sleep

Printed by The Press Ltd 0161-[illegible] 2885